THE

One Neceſſary Thing to be ſought.

Briefly Touched.

In a FOUR-FOLD

DIALOGUE,

Upon ſome of the great and moſt concerning Truths of Practical RELIGION.

PSAL. XIX. Verſe 11.

Moreover by them is thy Servant warned, and in keeping of them there is great Reward.

NOTTINGHAM:
Printed in the Year, MDCCXXIIII.

Chriſtian READER,

THE following Dialogues found in a litttle Treatiſe that I have by me, Printed about Forty-Five Years ſince. They are ſo Spiritual and ſweet, that I had much Comfort in peruſing of of them, which is the cauſe that moved me to print them, in this little Treatiſe, that thou mayeſt take Comfort in it alſo: In theſe Dialogues, as in a Glaſs, thou mayeſt find by reflecting on the State of thine own Soul, whether thou art a true Believer or not; and whether God by his Spirit is carrying on a Work of Regeneration and Sanctification in thy Heart and Soul, or not: That thou mayeſt ſee the great Difference between thoſe that are in a ſtate of Nature, and thoſe that are renewed and brought out of it, by Grace, and the abſolute neceſſity of ſuch a Work of God upon the Soul, in order to bring the Soul off from all Sin and ſelf, and to prepare the Soul by a Work of true Holineſs, and reſignation for the Inheritance of the Saints in Light. Reader, if thou art one that God hath begun ſuch a Work in, and thou findeſt by Experience it is carrying on in thee, then bleſs, praiſe, and adore thy God and thy Chriſt for it, and make it thy chief end and aim to live to him, and to honour and glorify him in thy whole Life and Converſation, and to ſee him to be thy All in All; but if thou art ſtill in a State of Nature,

ture, and haſt no Experience of thoſe Things, then my Advice to thee is, to read Gods Word and meditate in it: With this and all other experimental Books thou canſt get, and lay thy ſelf under the Preaching of the Word, where it is moſt powerfully and lived, and cry to God and beg of him to make the Means a Bleſſing unto thy Soul, and to make thee feel thy Miſery out of Chriſt and thy utter Inability to come to him, but by his Grace, Help and Strength, and to give thee Faith and Repentance and all other neceſſary Graces to enable thee to cleave to God in Heart and Life, that thou mayeſt be Partaker of his Bleſſings here and enjoy him hereafter; which is the hearty Deſire of him who hath publiſhed theſe Dialogues, with a Deſign (if it be the Will of God) to doe thee good, conſider good Reader, it will be no Excuſe for thee at the Day of Judgement, to ſay, thou hadſt no Ability to act any Thing in order to thy Salvation, I know thy Ability is but ſmall and thy Averſion to theſe Thiugs is very great; but remember that God hath made thee a reaſonable Creature, and he expects that thou ſhould act as ſuch, and to read and hear and to give Heed to what thou heareſt, and to think of thy State, and examine into it to find out how ſinful thy Heart is, and that all the Acts of Sin in thy Life are firſt bred in thy Heart and Nature, which is ſo vile and ſinful, that all Evil in thee ſprings from thence, and that thy very Nature until it be changed aud ſanctified by the Grace of God, is as contrary to God, and his pure and holy Nature and Law, as Darkneſs is contrary to Light; and theſe reflecting Acts Sinners are capable of as they are rational Creatures, and would they but endeavour to find out, what is their own State and Condition and to meditate on it, it might be a good

Step towards a Sence of Sin and their Misery without Christ; and it is my Thoughts that our merciful and good God is never wanting to assist those that are honestly inquiring into the State of their own Souls, and his good Spirit is ready to give a Sence of Sin and bring the Soul to Humility and Brokeness of Heart, even to all such that are faithfull in their Enquiry into the State of their own Souls; therefore begg of God to pull down thy Pride and self Conceit, and to give thee true Humility and lay thee at his Feet, which I take to be the true Way for Sinners to seek God in: Therefore, as all Grace and spiritual Good is from God and Christ only, let us by our earnest Prayers and Endeavors cry and groan to him for Help out of our Sin and Misery, who is over All, God blessed for ever. Amen.

I. DIA.

I. DIALOGUE.

QUESTION. I.

SINCE we have this Acceſs to converſe a little together, I ſhould gladly know how to gain ſuch an Hour, for ſome ſolid Fruit and Advantage in the Improvement thereof.

ANSWER.

It is a rare and unuſual Queſtion, in theſe Times, which you now make, though nothing more highly rational and neceſſary, and ſuch as gives Occaſion to ſome ſad Reflections, that may be too obvious on ſuch a Subject. 1. Of the ſmall Account moſt ſeem to have of Time, and of the preſent Hours going by, who yet cannot poſſibly be ſure of the next, nor bring again one Minute paſt, Time being ſuch a Tide, that floweth but once, and muſt be either taken, or loſt for ever. 2. How very ſad the ordinary Diſcourſe in Society and Viſits moſt make to other, is ſuch, that if one ſhould keep ſilent, and overtake with a Pen, what too frequently paſſeth in theſe Communications, and but read it over again, they could not but both

wonder and be ashamed at so strange and deformed an Image of themselves. 3. That when such mutual Converse and Society together puts off a Price in Mens Hands for some gainful Improvement hereof, and to make an Interest for the Lord, with that Christian Prudence and Sobriety, in giving others an occasion, more than to appear themselves; yet how rare is it almost to know Christians to be truly such by their walk, except in the Duties of Worship as if their Interest were not more to live Religion, than to profess it; and that so solemn and great a Business is now before all to die; and know what an Eternity means, with so marvellous a Change we must admit in another World, whither this present Hour we hasten, yea how few can be seen in their travelling Garb with their Loyns trimmed, and their Lamps burning; but rather as such who minded a settling here.

QUEST. II. *Though this be to the furthest convincing and clear; yet is it not to affright Men with the austerity of Religion, as if it did warrant no cheerful and comforting Converse together, and to divert thus in any suitable Recreations, that may be most satisfying and delightful?*

ANSW. I should be very tender to split on any such Rock, nor do in the least debate the warrantable use of Recreations, and necessary unbending of Mens Spirits this way, with sobriety; but I hope you will confess, 1. That a serious Frame, and the savour of spiritual Things kept on the Soul, leads more in to a true delight, and desirable enjoying of any outward Enjoyments, than the furthest Liberty, that many take otherwise. 2. That a due restraint thus

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is not eaſy, or to keep within theſe bounds of Chriſtian Liberty, which is found in the cloſe to bring a ſting therewith more imbittering, than the former Pleaſures ſeemed ſweet. 3. That there needs alſo a guard againſt ſuch unwarrantable and prophane Gaines of Lottery, as the *Cards* and *Dice*; where the Hook may be as evident as the Bait, and with that advantage given to the Devil this way, as it is not eaſy for ſuch to play alone, without having him a Partner, both in the Game and Gain; and no wonder, when he finds ſuch upon his own ground, and at a Work, where is ſo viſible a contempt and ſporting at the Providence of God, and taking his Name in vain; ſuch a daring to adventure on an immediate deciſion by Lot, which ſhould alone in Things of greateſt Weight be made uſe of by Prayer.

QUEST III. *You know, that beſides any ſuch Diverſions for Pleaſure, how moſt have their ordinary Buſineſs and Affairs to take them up in Converſe and Fellowſhip together, and Diſcourſe thereon, as their ſeveral Imployments lye, and here is a concerning Duty.*

ANSW. I am far from queſtioning, what thus may be either needful, or expedient; yea I know one may follow with advantage the work of a Chriſtian in that way of his outward Calling, more than in the furtheſt abſtractedneſs from the World, and all human Society; and that the more a Chriſtian, the more alſo is he a Man, and at the greater advantage thus for being active and dexterous in his outward Concerns, but you know *the time is ſhort*, and theſe frequent intercommunings moſt have about Things of the World are oft more from a too eager ſcent after the ſame, than upon grounds either of Neceſſity, or

Conveniency, as though there their main Work lay; and what is for Eternity, were but ſomething on the By to be followed.

QUEST. IV. *Since we are thus fallen on ſuch a Subject, I ſhould deſire to know, if there be cauſe to offend, or queſtion that freedom, which is ſo uſual in Mens ordinary Converſe together, for ſpeaking their Thoughts at large, and to paſs their Judgment on others at a diſtance, as they ſee cauſe, or have either Prejudice, or Reſpects to them: For to me it ſeems the moſt common Subject of Diſcourſe, almoſt in all Societies?*

ANSW. The Occaſion you have for ſuch a Propoſal, is too manifeſt, and a Diſeaſe ſo ſpreadiug, as ſeems to deſpiſe all Remedies, but may be the more ſtrange, that it is ſure, this is not with moſt, from want of light concerning Duty, or how deep a Wound they may thus give themſelves more than others: But oh is this freedom you ſpeak of 1. *To abound in Love towards all Men*, 1. *Theſ.* 3. 12 and by a tender condeſcending deport *to be all things to all for the Goſpel's ſake?* 2. Is this to enforce reſpect and an awful regard to the Truth, from ſuch as never knew the inward Power thereof on their Soul, ſo as they might ſee that a ſerious Chriſtian is the truly beſt Friend and Neighbour; yea thus to be as a common good and bleſſing to Mankind; one of whom brings more Credit in to the Doctrine of Chriſt than an hundred Profeſſors? 3. Is this to anſwer ſo preſſing a Call, *Coll.* 3 12. *Put on therefore, as the Elect of God, holy and beloved, Bowels of Mercies, Kindneſs, Humbleneſs of Mind, Meekneſs, Long-Suffering, Forbearing one another, and Forgiving one another. If any Man have a Quarrel againſt any, even as Chriſt forgave you, ſo alſo*

alſo do you? And is not ſuch tenderneſs in our Walk towards others, an indiſpenſible part of our Sanctification, whilſt this Freedom you ſpeak of, is too oft a giving vent to ſome hid Bitterneſs and Enmity within againſt ſuch, who may be the Object of the Love of God in Chriſt, as all the ſanctified are? But this ſeems to be a peculiar Poiſon and Plague of the preſent Age. 4. Can you find it eaſy, yea poſſible to have ſuch uſual Freedom you ſpeak of, conſiſtent with theſe expreſs Commands of the great Lawgiver; *To love our Enemies, Matth.* 5. 44. *Not to be overcome of Evil, but to overcome Evil with Good, Rom.* 12. 21. *To ſpeak Evil of none* in a deſigned blotting of their Name, *Tit.* 3. 7. *Jam.* 2 11. or *ſmite them with the Tongue? Jer.* 20. 19. Sure if theſe be the revealed Counſel of God, and a part of that holy and ſpotleſs Rule of our Duty, ſhould not the ſame diſtance be kept here, as with other ſcandalous Sins? 5 Whatever may be of a neceſſary Call ſometimes to witneſs againſt others at a Diſtance, when the Truth is concerned, and the Advantage of ſome then preſent, and for their being guarded againſt any contagious Evil or Snare, as alſo upon a ſerious Reſentment of any Injury done to the Lord; yea for a juſt and neceſſary clearing themſelves, from the Reproach of ſuch, who through them might thus ſeek to thruſt at the Credit of the Goſpel; yet is there not even here a ſpecial regard to be had to that end, that *it may be for Edification, Rom.* 15. 2. And that no Bitterneſs or Animoſity on ſome other Account be the great incitement thereto, for then ſuch do ſerve their own Luſt and Paſſion. It was a choice Word of one, *I am* (ſays he) *reſtrained to ſpeak my Judgment of ſuch,*

by whom I have been injured, lest my Light be bribed to serve that most dreadful Lust of Revenge; O Revenge! which is so visible a transforming into the very Image of the Devil, by which he hath gained his greatest Triumphs over many. 6. Is this an answering to that excellent Rule given by our Master, to *do to others what we would have them doing to us, Matth.* 7. 12? Than which (besides the Authority of the Command) nothing is more beautiful, and becoming an immortal Soul, nothing more answering to reason than thus to argue, how should I expect or wish that measure from others, if my Heart doth not serve to give the same to them? 7. And doth not such a Freedom you speak of, bear a blacker dye, the more personal Respects may be thus pretended, when some hid Prejudice lies at the Root, since thus it is a more dreadful Dissimulation before God, and the Wound made deeper, by being under a shew andcover of Love, like *Joabs* designed embracement of *Amasa*, for that very end that he might smight him at the fifth. Rib?

Quest. V. *What, is there no warrantable judging then of others, and condemning such from whom we injuriously suffer, when this is not against the Truth?*

Answ. My Friend, you know there is but *one Judge and Lawgiver, whose it is to kill and make alive, Jam.* 4. *ver.* 12. Though each hath allowed to him a judgment of Discretion; but there is, I confess, a choice and and sure way for one to judge another, Oh that it were more known amongst Men, to judge them by their Walk and Practice; so as by tenderness and Sobriety to condemn the imbittered Passion of others by Silence and Compassion, thus to rebuke a hasty

hasty and brawling Temper; yea to take Revenge, (O a blessed Revenge) on such as hate them by seeking in truth their good. And is it not thus the Holy Ghost hath shewed how with the greatest advantage a Christian can oppose himself to his Adversaries, and bear witness against them 2 *Cor. ver.* 6. *By Pureness, by Knowledge, by Long-suffering, by Kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by Love unfeigned, by the Word of Truth, by the Power of God, by the Armour of Righteousness on the right Hand and on the left.*

QUEST. VI. *Such is the authority and beauty of Truth, even when it is most grieving and contrary to the Flesh, as puts me to a new enquiry on this Subject; what should most help to that sweet, and desirable Converse with others in a sad and distempered Time, so as Love and Concord may lose no ground, and thus to answer what Christian Prudence calls for in such a Case?*

ANSW. This, I confess, were a choice and desirable Project worthy and becoming a Christian to follow in the greatest earnest, when so many low designs are this Day on foot; not only to adorn the Gospel, but for their own inward Peace and Tranquility; for which I may adventure to offer these few Things, which I am sure cannot be practically understood, what ever the Times or Place be wherein our Lot is cast, and not help to a sweet facility in such a Duty. 1. To guard against *Credulity*, or a being hasty to conceive an Injury and laying too great a Weight on sudden Conjectures and Suspicion, which tends both to darken and disquiet the Mind; none ever yet gained by indulgence hereto, but how oft have their after Thoughts enforced an upbraiding of themselves with weakness and folly? 2. How sweet

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and eaſy might this become to us in learning that Leſſon more from our bleſſed Maſter of *Meekneſs*, *Matth.* 11. *ver.* 29. Which is one of the rare Graces of the Spirit, and no ſoftneſs of Nature, ſo bleſſed a Cure and Relief to the moſt tart and froward Temper hath ſuch advantage with it to convince the World, and conciliate Mens Reſpects to the truth of Holineſs, who look but at a Diſtance by ſo lovely and gaining an Appearance. And why is ſuch a cover put on an imbittered and paſſionate Diſpoſition, that it is their natural Complection? it may be true, but it is ſure, it is black Nature unſubdued to the Grace of God; whilſt many naturally paſſionate and cholerick have through Grace got that Conqueſt over themſelves, as few with whom they have converſed could diſcern any ſuch thing, even upon moſt remarkable Provocations. 3. To know, and be under ſome weight of this, as a ſpecial opportunity for the Lord, the Loſs whereof ſhould be a Loſs indeed, when there is ſuch a Call, to *requite evil with good*, both in doing and ſpeaking, *And your Reward ſhall be great*, *Luk.* 6. *v.* 35. And are not a Chriſtians *Opportunities* a part of his *Riches* and Treaſure? I know this will ſeem a ſtrange contradiction to many, but a ſubdued Chriſtian by the Grace of God, is a ſtrange and marvellous thing. 4. Let us know more what it is to be *humble*, and then forbearance and tender condeſcendance in our Walk with others will natively follow. O bleſſed *humility*, that ſhineth moſt in its diſappearing, and lays the Chriſtian more truly near his Hope, yea nearer to Heaven, when it lays his Face on the Duſt, than when his Head hath ſeemed to be among the Stars. O what ſweet and deſirable

rable Society would this make amongſt Chriſtians, which teacheth effectually to paſs by Injuries, and not ſeek their own Glory, or to dare a deſpiſing of others; which by keeping the Spirit low fits them for nearer Converſe with God, and a being led in the way of his Counſels, and whilſt Pride ſwells, and cauſeth a Fever in the Soul, this brings ſo ſweet and ſenſible a cool thereto; yea it is one of the two great Leſſons, that Chriſt hath put by themſelves, *Matth.* 11. *v.* 29. and thus enſured a reſt and tranquillity of Soul, whatever be the changes of their outward Lot. 5. Let us alſo for this end get ſight much kept of that great Example ſet before us for our conformity thereto, 1 *Pet.* 2. 23. *Who being reviled, reviled not again, but committed himſelf to him that judgeth righteouſly*, and it is ſure we then fruſtrate our relief in the laſt part of theſe Words, if the firſt be not ſeriouſly taken along therewith. 6. We have this excellent Rule alſo expreſly commanded us, *To ſeek Peace with all Men and follow after it*, *Pſ* 34 *v.* 14. *Heb.* 12. 14. Yea even with ſuch, from whom we have ſuſtained the greateſt Injury; nor can it anſwer this to give it entertainment, when it comes; but to go forth and meet the ſame, yea to ſeek it when it is a miſſing, and though it flee, to follow it. O! what a lovely appearance doth this put upon Chriſtians, and gives them a greater Victory, than to overcome a City, when thus Grace in its vigorous exerciſe in one, meets with the prevailing corruption of another, and by yeilding overcomes; by a humble condeſcendance ſubjects the Proud, ſo as to enforce their falling before that more excellent Spirit, with a diſcernable awe and authority over them, for *Greater is he who is in them, than he who is in the*

World, 1. *Joh.* 4. *v.* 4. 7. Let us be tender in taking offence no leſs, than in giving, in a haſty judging of Perſons, or Actions at a diſtance, when we cannot ſo certainly know, what Circumſtances may concurr in ſuch a caſe, and ſure each may know, how many things have begot jealouſy and bitterneſs of Spirit, which upon more clear and convincing trial have not had the leaſt ground, whilſt thus the great Adverſary of the Church getteth advantage. 8. To be ſlow to ſpeak, which hath its peculiar beauty and advantage at all times is of ſingular uſe here, when under any ſtir or perturbation of Spirit, thus to get a reſtraint over themſelves, till the Water be more clear, and the Mud fallen to the Ground. O what a choice mean were this to prevent the frequent diſcompoſure many fall in, to be under ſome ſerious and ſevere Reſolution, not to ſpeak for ſome time, when they are provoked, and how ſweet and quieting ſhould this be upon after Thoughts? 9. A being much at home by ſelf-reflection, and having our Eyes turned inward, ſhould much help to blunt the keeneſs of that edge, which is too oft againſt others, and put Chriſtians on another ſcent, how *to reſtore ſuch with the Spirit of Meekneſs, who may be overtaken with a Fault, conſidering thy ſelf, leſt thou alſo be tempted*, *Gal.* 6. *v.* 1. Here muſt be no cover, for any coolneſs, or indifferency in the matters of Truth, but it is ſure, there is a ſweet Concord there, in the zeal of God with the Spirit of Meekneſs, and no jar, but what our Corruption makes O bleſſed they who can go the furtheſt length of ceding in their own Things, and bear perſonal Reflections, but may not, nor dare quit any thing upon their Maſters Intereſt. I am

much

much perſwaded one great let of ſuch a diſcernable withholding of the Influences of God, and which obſtructeth Prayer at this Day, is much there, that the Spirit of Love and Tenderneſs is not more entertained amongſt Chriſtians.

QUEST. VII. *If theſe Truths you ſpeak of were more practically known, what another Luſtre and Appearance ſhould Chriſtian Society and Converſe then have; and the Times we are now fallen in ſeem to need Examples more than Precepts this way; but oh! for what uſe can ſome be to promote any intereſt for God, who are in ſo mean and low a Capacity?*

ANSW. Why do you thus ſpeak? For it is ſure, none can want ſome trial in this preſent Caſe, to give a convincing Example to others of the Truth and Power of Godlineſs; nor is there any Lot and Condition ſo low and obſcure, where theſe Advantages does not wait them for ſome honourable Service to the Lord in their Day. 1. To adorn the Doctrine of the Goſpel, by a Chriſtianly Prudent and tender walk in ſhewing forth *the Power and Vertues of him, that hath called them*, and thus by commending Holineſs, to gain Reſpect to the Truth, even from the Conſcience of ſuch as hate it. How remarkably hath this made a very mean and obſcure Perſon otherwiſe, ſhine with greateſt brightneſs in the Place and Corner he lived in? 2. And doth not times of deepeſt Diſtreſs, in a low and afflicted ſtate afford moſt ſpecial Opportunities for ſome eminent Fruit and Service of Jeſus Chriſt? by *abaſement* rather than *abounding*? Yea what? is not the Affliction and Poverty of the meaneſt a Talent to improve for the Lord, and paying Rent to him by Patience and Chriſtian en-

during with Cheerfulneſs, that it is for his Sake, no leſs than the greateſt enlargement of others? 3. As no Service to ſuch a Maſter ſhall ever be loſt, or want of *having more given in to ſuch, who are faithful in their little*, hath not thus alſo the meaneſt Chriſtian ſome Call from the Company he may be caſt in, when Atheiſm is at ſuch a height, and a Generation of Mockers almoſt every where abounding, to confeſs Jeſus Chriſt, and his Truth before Men, by ſome grave and convincing Witneſs thereto, as well, as when he is called before Rulers? ſince to ſuch an occaſional Call, that Scripture hath a reſpect likewiſe, as well as to a more ſolemn and publick Appearance, *Matth.* 10. 32. *He that confeſſeth me before Men, him will I confeſs before my Father and his Angels*: Oh! What it is to know, *Pſal.* 42. 2. *It was as a Sword in my Bones, when they ſaid unto me continually, where is thy God?* 4. Can a Chriſtians Lot be too low, for following ſo great a Service to the Publick Intereſt of the Church, by Prayer and wreſtling in Secret, when there is no Witneſs from without, but he who ſeeth in Secret, will not let this want an open Reward, and if not here, yet at the appearing of Jeſus Chriſt?

Quest. VIII. *But ſhould not thus, ſuch whoſe Credit with Men cannot bear them out with much weight, become but a Matter of Sport and Deriſion to theſe they converſe with, in a time when ſerious Religion is looked on, as the greateſt of Fooliſhneſs; yea ſhould it not reſtrain ones* Caſting of Pearles before Swine, leſt they turn again, and tear them? Mat. 7. 6.

Answ. You know that Chriſtian Wiſdom is profitable to direct in ſuch a Duty as occaſion offers, and that rule of *expediency* ſhould be much weighed, what

advantage

advantage present Circumstances may offer of deny, for Edification; but I must say, carnal Prudence takes off too much advantage here; and in no time hath that Truth wanted a convincing Seal of the Lords *Choosing the foolish Things of the World to confound the wise, and Things that are despised, yea Things that are not, hath he chosen, to bring to nought Things that are, that no Flesh should glory in his Presence,* 1. *Cor.* 1. 27. 28. And it is sure, you cannot but know, 1. That there is some Awe and Authority, which attend the Truth of Holiness, even in a very mean Person on the Conscience of Men, who may be otherwise haters thereof: Yea to enforce some greater Evidence of their Respects. 2. And does not serious *Piety* and *Practical Prudence* mutually strengthen other, so as the more a Christian, the more he is thus at an Advantage to know his Duty, and be sagaciously discerning therein. 3. But how amazing is such a Reproach cast at this Day upon *Piety*, of weakness and foolishness (not but that Christians in truth, may be found in many Things imprudent, which is because they are not more Christians) whilst the native result of serious Godliness is so evident, to have a watching Eye over ones Spirit, to the moderation of Passions, and a sweet calm and composure of Mind, amidst the many Snares and Temptations here: Their Heart thus lying near to their working Hand, as *Solomon shews, Eccles.* 10 2. *A wise Man's Heart is at his right Hand, but a Fool's is at his left.*

DIALOGUE II.

THE late communing we had at our former meeting together, (which I hope may not want ſome Fruit) puts me to follow this advantage of our preſent Converſe upon a further Account, for clearing ſome of the moſt weighty Concerns of Chriſtianity; and to loſe no Time, the firſt Propoſal I make is this.

QUESTION. I.

How it is demonſtrably clear, that there are two contrary States, to which the whole Race of Mankind belongs; a State of Nature, and that which we muſt be entered into by Grace, yea, that the new Birth and that marvellous Change by Converſion *makes a Chriſtian to differ from the reſt of Men, not in Degree, but in Kind and Nature, no leſs than the State of Man here is above the Beaſts.*

ANSWER.

It is not ſtrange, though ſo great a Truth ſhould be marvellous to our Thoughts, upon any ſerious Converſe therewith, but ſuch cleareſt Evidence hath the certainty of this from the Scripture, and lies ſo cloſe with the whole thereof, as I am ſure, they muſt quit the Bible, and this together; whilſt theſe are ſo undeniable, even to our Senſe. 1. That one Chriſti-

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an cannot beget another; and how far this new Life by Grace is above Nature, or the poſſibility of Second Cauſes, which no Arguments, or perſuaſives of Eloquence by moral Influence could ever effectuate, but is the immediate Work of the Spirit, and forming of a new *Creation* by the Word of the Goſpel, in the naked ſimplicity thereof. 2. How clear is the Truth of this marvellons State of Grace, by ſo viſible a reality of the Effects and Operations thereof; as to change an impoiſoned Nature, and take off that imbred averſion to Spiritual Things; the ingrafting of the Word by a ſecond Impreſſion of the Law written upon the Heart and inward Parts, whereby it is transformed into the ſame Image; yea ſuch convincing effects, as a living Chriſtian may be as diſcernable, as one being a living Man, by Signs and Marks peculiar to his kind. 3. Is it not known with the furtheſt Evidence, the truth of a vital ſcent and air with ſerions Godlineſs, which no fair ſhew in the Fleſh, or any Profeſſion can poſſibly counterfeit, no more than the greateſt Artiſts could paint the ſweet ſmell of the Violet and Roſe, or make a dead Picture to breath and move. 4. You may ſee the reallity of this State, whoſe native Tendency is to move upward to its Original, as naturally as the Sparks go upward, in Love, Deſire, and a feeling Intercourſe then with him; yea with ſuch a ſupernatural inſtinct, which is no leſs marvellous and evident, than that of the young Child moving toward the Breaſts. 5. It is ſuch a State, where you may ſee the moſt diſcerning of Men in a natural Condition know not, nor can underſtand what belongs thereto, or what theſe felt Enjoyments of God and his workings on the Soul

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are, or their being brought near to his reconciled Face in Chriſt, and laid under theſe warming Beams; no more than the Beaſts of the Field know what belongs to the State of Man, which is ſo high in its Kind above them. 6. Such a State alſo, as needs the continued Breathings and Influences of the Spirit of Life, to keep it in any vigorous Exerciſe, no leſs than the parched Ground hath need of the Rain, without which it is dried and languiſheth; yea ſuch as you know hath its Food, Delights and Griefs peculiar to its own Nature, with which Strangers cannot intermeddle.

QUEST. II. *But ſince it is too evident that the moſt of Men, and ſo many of notable Gifts and Endowments know nothing what belongs to that State you ſpeak of, or or what is further than the Condition they are in by* Nature: *Oh! is that natural State, ſo very dreadful and affrighting as you ſeem to underſtand, or that none poſſibly can be ſaved herein, whilſt not ſo groſs and corrupt as others.*

ANSW. You know what Account the Scripture hath given of this, and how exact a Pourtraicture is there of ſuch a State in its true Shape and Colours; and if Men will but credit their own Eyes, let them but firſt look in on themſelves, and then abroad upon the World, and I am ſure, ſuch muſt ſee, that the Face does not more anſwer to its own reſemblance in the Glaſs, than this deplorable State of Nature, without renovation by Grace does anſwer that marvellous and clear diſcovery of the Holy Ghoſt in the written Word thereof; and oh! is it not an amazing, and horrid Sight, when ſuch is the State of Nature, *as* 1. *Neither can, nor will receive the Things of the Spirit of God,*

God, 1 *Cor.* 2 *ver.* 14. But whatever uſe theſe ſeem to have of Reaſon, in the Things of a Man both natural and civil, yea in the Theory of religious Things, yet neither knows, nor can ſavour what Spiritual Truths are in themſelves, and their own Nature. 2. Where you ſee ſo ſtrange *an Enmity and imbred Alienation* from the Life of God, with a continued byaſs and tendency againſt Holineſs, *Gal.* 4 *ver.* 29. Where no private Quarrel, or perſonal Intereſt giveth riſe thereto: Yea thus how no Enmity is more deep and fixed againſt the Goſpel, than that which follows a poliſhed and refined Nature. 3. It is not only the Saints, who have each an unregenerate Part within, but a natural Conſcience is enforced to witneſs how Sin is attended with Shame, and a making themſelves vile thereby, yea ſuch, as none can put on their Cloaths in the Morning, but may have an Account of the fallen State of Man. 4. From whence are theſe *Wars and Fightings* without, and theſe impetuous boilings of Envy, Wrath, and Revenge within? Are they not from the *Luſts of the Fleſh*, *Jam.* 4. *ver.* 16. Yea ſuch eager graſpings after that Bait of carnal Pleaſure, even whilſt they know the imbittering Sting which inſeperably follows thereon? 5. And what do theſe ſtrange Conflicts, and contrary Tides, with which Men are ſo oft hurried and rent in Pieces, as with wild Horſes, betwixt their Judgment and Will, which once were in a ſweet League, ſuch as even Heathens were forced to ſee and confeſs, that if the Mind of flagitious Men were laid open, it would be ſeen how they are cruciated and puniſhed by their own Sins, and as the Body is rent and torn by Torture, ſo is the Mind, by Cruelty, Envy, Luſts. and

Paſſion, with theſe inordinate Deſires and Perturbations within? O! what do theſe mean, if you will but come near to conſider this ſo ſad and amazing a Sight: Are they not a viſible tranſcript of black Nature, whereinto Man is fallen? 6. And what a horrid Thing muſt that be, that ſhould be capable of ſuch Contempt of the Holineſs of God, and ſo inſenſible of its own Vileneſs and Pollution, yea ſuch as renders Men under the greateſt advantage of all accompliſhments of Gifts whether Moral or Natural; yea the greateſt of Men, who are Strangers to a renewed State, to be the vileſt and baſeſt Part of the Creation? And O what a dreadful Sight will ſuch once be to the Saints and Angels, when the ſinfulneſs of Sin, and the Shame of their Nakedneſs ſhall be then ſhewed forth?

QUEST. III. *Though I am inforced to aſſent to ſuch clear and undeniable Evidences of that deplorable State Men are in by Nature, whilſt though it cannot be hid yet how little is it conſidered, or laid to Heart? But oh! is there ſo indiſpenſible a neceſſity of Holineſs and to know the inward Power thereof on the Soul, and of a new Life begot in us by Regeneration, as none can be poſſibly ſaved, and ſecured from everlaſting Wrath without this, whilſt there is ſuch abounding Light in theſe Times, yea a viſible adherence, and aſſent to the Doctrine of Chriſt by many who may be Strangers to this?*

ANSW. I ſhall but offer ſome grounds to clear the abſolute and peremptory neceſſity of this you ſeem to queſtion, and then leave you to judge about it, when you have once brought them near your Thoughts. 1. Though our Right and claim to an eternal Glory muſt alone be by the Righteouſneſs of Chriſt,

Chriſt, and is not founded on *Holineſs*, yet it is as true, we have none without it, for *without this* hath the God of Truth by his Word and Faithfulneſs enſured, that *None ſhall ſee his Face, Heb.* 12. *ver.* 14. nor *Without the new Birth, that it is poſſible to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, Joh.* 3. *ver.* 3. 2. It is ſure, without this, Mens hope of the Glory which is to come can lean upon no other ground, but that the Holy God muſt ceaſe to be faithful and true, and reſcind his everlaſting Decrees and Purpoſe for complying with their Sins, *Eph* 1. *ver.* 4. *Who hath choſen us in Chriſt before the Foundation of the World, that we ſhould be Holy and unblameable before him in Love.* 3. If there can be no reconciling of Heaven and Hell, then without this can none enter into that bleſſed State where is the perfect enjoyment of God; ſince there is an amazing inconſiſtence with the Nature of the Things themſelves, how ſuch could poſſibly dwell there, who were never *made meet to be partakers of that Inheritance of the Saints in Light by a new Nature, Col.* 1. *v.* 12. 4. And what a ſtrange contradiction to Reaſon is this, for to think they are approaching to Glory, if it be not in the way to Grace, or that ſuch can love that in another World, which they now ſo viſibly hate, or can thus own any true deſire or hope of that bleſſed State, who have ſuch a natural and imbred averſion to the begun enjoying of it here, in the Life and work of Sanctification. 5. It is ſure that our eternal Life in Glory muſt be begun in that *new Life*, which is by Grace formed here in the Soul; nor can ſuch ever poſſibly expect to enter that Kingdom which is above, where the Kingdom of God in ſome meaſure is not *known within here, which*

conſiſts in Righteouſneſs, Peace, and Joy in the Holy-Ghoſt, Rom. 14. *ver.* 17. Though it ſure alſo, that Grace, and Grace alone muſt ſum and cloſe all our Accounts, yea that the whole of practical Godlineſs muſt reſolve there, *I live, yet not I, but Chriſt liveth in me, and the Life I now live in the Fleſh, I live by the Faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himſelf for me, Galat.* 2. *ver* 20.

QUEST. IV. *I confeſs it is not eaſy, except Men turn reſolutely Atheiſts, to debate this Truth, but Oh! what ſhould it mean, that ſo few can be ſeen in earneſt in ſuch a Throng of profeſſed Chriſtians, with that excellent ſtudy of Holineſs, who yet come the furtheſt length in an aſſent thereto, and what might moſt help to this end?*

ANSW. It is irreſiſtable Grace which alone can make this effectual. But I ſhall offer ſome few enforcing Motives for ſo great and neceſſary a Study, with this one Deſire, that you might in earneſt think thereon, when alone. 1. That it is more excellent and deſirable to exerciſe Grace, than to enjoy Comfort, when the more ſharp and ſearching Conflicts this meets with for Trial, the more Fruit and Gain is going to the fore here and for ever; Yea are not the moſt remarkable Aſſaults and Trials of a Chriſtians Life ſome of his greateſt Opportunities for *ſowing to the Spirit, Gal.* 6. *ver.* 8. *and being faithful to their Meaſure and Talent, Matth.* 25. *ver.* 15. Yea ſuch, wherein our bleſſed Head, in the Truth of his Grace in them, and marvellous Power thereof, hath ſo conſpicuous a Triumph in each of his People, which ſhould be accounted a Gain to ſuch, beyond the ſaddeſt Loſs they can ſuſtain otherwiſe. 2. That not

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the leaſt act, or exerciſe of *Holineſs*, and whatſoever hath been done for the Lord can be loſt, but ſhall be had in Remembrance and abide for Ever, in its eternal Reward; yea nothing of the Chriſtians Work in doing, or enduring, their ſecret wreſtlings againſt Sin, the reſiſting of Temptations, Mortification, and Patience for the Name of Chriſt, when moſt hid from the Eyes of Men, ſhall be forgot by him who ſees in Secret, to meet them once and for ever, with their Maſter's Acceptance, *well done*, &c. *Matth.* 25. *ver.* 21. in the fulneſs of Joy, and their being rewarded before the Angels and all the Redeemed. O who would not run, though all the way ſhould be through Thickets of Briars and Thorns, who have ſuch a Joy and hope ſet before them? And that here is no doubtful or conjectural Thing, go to the Scripture and ſee what is ſo expreſly ſhewed, 2. *Cor.* 4 *ver.* 17. *For our light Affliction which is but for a Moment*, (whereby the Chriſtians Sanctification is both tried and exerciſed) *worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory*, 1. *Pet.* 1. 7. *That the trial of your Faith being much more precious, than the Gold that periſheth, though it be tried with Fire, might be found unto Praiſe, and Glory, and Honour, at the Appearance of Jeſus Chriſt*: and *Rev.* 14. *ver.* 13. *And I heard a Voice from Heaven, ſaying unto me, Bleſſed are the Dead, who die in the Lord, from henceforth: Yea ſaith the Spirit, for they reſt from their Labour, and their Works do follow them*; They go not before, ſince it's the Blood of Chriſt which only can do this, and make ſure the Chriſtians Entry into that bleſſed Land: But they ſhall aſſuredly follow, and abide for ever before the Lord. 3. And is not *Sanctification* the

higheſt excellency that humane Nature is capable of, and no leſs marvellous than our Redemption by Chriſt from eternal Wrath, in having the Soul thus ſubdued by Grace, and to be made Partakers of the *Divine Nature*? O how great and aſtoniſhing a Thing is it, that the Seed and Principles of Holineſs in the Chriſtian Soul ſhould be preſerved amidſt ſuch continual Aſſaults of Corruption within, and theſe Temptation that are without, as a ſpark of Fire in the midſt of Waters, which impetuouſly run to quench the ſame; yea that ſuch a Party, as the Devil, the World and the Fleſh, by which the moſt of Mankind is ſo viſibly enſlaved, and kept in Chains, yet thus made to fall in their greateſt Strength, before the Truth of Holineſs, in the meaneſt of the Saints, though nothing here for them *to boaſt in of themſelves, but in the Power of Chriſt thus reſting upon them*, 2. *Cor.* 12. *ver.* 9. That Day, O bleſſed Day! is approaching, when this Scripture ſhall be fully underſtood, which I have ſometimes thought on as a Truth of greateſt Weight, 2. *Theſſ.* 1. 10. *When he ſhall come to be glorified in his Saints, and to be admired in all them that Believe:* Which is not only to be admired by them, but in them; for what he hath wrought and perfected in them, as well as done for them. 4. Is it not known and tried, that without *Holineſs* in its lively exerciſe, all aſſays for inward Peace or Tranquillity of Mind, and that compoſure of the Affections, which is both ſo comforting and beautifying of a Chriſtian, will be in vain? and oh! what does remain, if this be not underſtood, what a preſent and ſenſible Relief is here in *Love*, *Humility*, *Meekneſs*, *Patience*, and *Hope*, to the ſaddeſt Diſtempers of the Mind?

Mind? *Pſal.* 119. 165. *Great Peace have they that love thy Law, and nothing ſhall offend them.* That whilſt Satan is at the furtheſt at work to faint and cruſh the Chriſtian in his Journey homeward; yet can he only reach a bruiſing of their Heel, who are thus ſecured *by the whole Armour of God*, from a thruſt at their vital Parts, *Eph. 6. ver.* 14. and therefore it is remarkable, that there is no piece of Armour there given for the Back, but only to ſuch as withſtand and reſiſt, nor to thoſe who flie. 5. Is not the Fruits of *Holineſs* that peculiar *Revenue*, which Jeſus Chriſt calleth from his followers here, to adorn the Doctrine of the Goſpel, and ſhew his Grace towards them has not been in vain? And are not theſe ſuch *Fruits* which can only be brought forth in the Seaſon thereof, a Seaſon that is ſhort, and for all Eternity will not recurr again? 6. It is ſure, nothing is ſo lovely to raviſh the Soul with the Glory and excellency thereof as this, were it ſpiritually diſcerned; to ſee and admire that infinite Purity, Righteouſneſs, Truth and Love ſhining in the great Pattern Chriſt himſelf, and what a marvellous Luſtre the reflection hereof hath, even on his Followers here on the Earth, in ſome begun conformity to his glorious Image, whilſt not one Glance thereof in truth, (whatever be of a falſe Shew) is to be found in the whole World beſides? Oh were it believed, how much of Heaven might be enjoyed here by a greater length in the ſtudy of Holineſs, and what inexpreſſible Joy, Peace and ſerenity of Spirit doth aſſuredly wait thereon; what ſweet facility and delight is thus reached in the Chriſtians Work, when their Motion lies from the inward Principles of a new Life, yea that it is ſure, the meaneſt

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this Day is by Grace called up to a higher State, than that of the greateſt Monarchs of the Earth, and if there were no greater Intereſt and Preferment to be looked after than what the World can beſtow on any, we could not eaſily know what were deſirable here in being Men.

QUERY. V. *Since theſe Truths are to the furtheſt convincing and clear, and that it is ſure, this is the great Buſineſs I have to follow in the few Days I am to be upon the Earth, to be aſſured of an eternal Bleſſedneſs; I would in earneſt know, what are the moſt clear and undeniable Marks from the* Scripture, *of a* being in Chriſt, *and the certainty of* Converſion, *that I lean not my Peace here on ſome falſe ground, when it is ſo amazing at what rate many now own themſelves to be Chriſtians; for if I be deceived about that, and go with the Multitude; Oh then I am deceived indeed, which Eternity cannot recover again, through want of the ſerious trial of this within Time?*

ANSW. It is a great Buſineſs you are upon, and aſſuredly the higheſt Work of a Chriſtians Life now to live for God, and to know they ſhall for ever be with him in Glory: Oh! how rare are thoſe in this Age, who are on this trial, and to work out their Salvation in fear and trembling: Whilſt ſuch a throng is about the Things of this Life, as almoſt no Time can be found for the one *neceſſary Thing*. It is ſure, to have an Evidence of our being in the ſtate of Grace, is of more worth than all the Trouble can be in acquiring it, and if ſuch die in a miſtake here, they are then undone for ever; but it is ſtrange what means ſuch halting and uncertainty in this Matter, when it is ſo clear. 1. That there is ſuch a certainty attainable

attainable of one's State and being in Christ, as can make it easy to adventure into Eternity with that assurance, *For me to die is Gain*, *Phil.* 1. 21. and that *Psal.* 73. 24. *He will guide me by his Counsel, and afterward receive me to Glory.* Which I am sure, were it more understood, the greatest Trial of a Christian then should be more how to bear his Joy, than his Griefs, even under the sorest pressure of Affliction; yea the greatest acts of Patience and Self-denial would be to be willing and submissive to stay for some time here. 2. It is sure, the Scripture leaves none to a doubtful or uncertain Enquiry concerning this; but hath so clear and distinct a Sound, as none needs say, *Who shall go up to Heaven*, that we may know, whether we shall dwell there for ever, sure *the Word is near*, *Rom.* 10. *ver.* 8. *Deut.* 30. *ver.* 12. and *These Things are written that our Joy may be full*, 1. *Joh.* 1. *ver.* 4. and *That these who believe, may know they have eternal Life*, 1. *Joh.* 5. *ver.* 13. 3. Though the Work of Trial concerning a Christians State be of greatest Weight, yet lies it not in any long Circuit, or many Words, but it is such as from some few clear plain and infallible Marks, which are founded upon cleerest Evidence from the Scripture, may be with the furtheft certainty determined. 4. It is to the *touch Stone*, but not to the *ballance* a Christian must here come for Trial, that it be true in the kind, even whilst the degree and measure may be very small to their Eyes. 5. But it is needful to know that the lowest degree of Grace is above Flesh and Blood, so as none can come to Jesus Christ, without a drawing Power from himself, and such a Pull at the Heart, as must bring the Gripe with it. But to come a little

more near to your Propoſal. Do you in truth queſtion, if you have ever yet paſt the new Birth, and be in the State of Grace, and where you ſhall dwell for ever? You may then bring it to a ſpeedy cloſe upon theſe clear and undeniable grounds. 1. That the Scriptures bring down before our Eyes that greateſt depth of *Election*, ſo as it can be no more ſure ſuch ſhall be ſaved, who are predeſtinate to Life, were it poſſible to ſee their Names writ in that ſecret Roll of the eternal Counſel of God, than it is ſure ſuch are elected, and ſhall undoubtedly be ſaved, who have come to Jeſus Chriſt in the acceptation of his offer in the Goſpel; for thus muſt we firſt make *our effectual Calling ſure*, and then we aſſuredly know *our Election*. 2. *Pet.* 1. 10. 2. There can be no debate here, that where Converſion is, the work of the Spirit muſt be then known in convincing Men of Sin. *Joh.* 16. 9. ſince the great Healer can be no Phyſician to the *whole*, but to the *ſick*, *Matth.* 9. 12. ſuch who have been in ſome Meaſure pricked to the Heart with ſuch a Sight of a natural State, the ſinfulneſs of Sin, the ſpiritual extent of the Law in ſome ſuch Meaſure and Degree, as is needful to make room for Jeſus Chriſt, which had never a weight on them before; that as the Needle in the Compaſs in a continued agitation, and cannot fix until it be at the right Point and ſettle there, then, O then is there no poſſible quiet, until they have *found a Reſt in Jeſus Chriſt*, *Matth.* 11. 29. 3. *If any be in Chriſt, he is a new Creature*, 2. *Cor.* 5. 17. which is the *new Man* that all muſt put on, who were ever ſavingly called, and thus know what it is to have that witneſs within of the ſanctifying Work of the Spirit, which is always a ſure, though not al-

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ways alike clear Evidence of a new State and *being in Chriſt*, *Rom.* 8. 1. Yea it is ſure, the *new Birth* muſt be once paſt here, *Joh.* 3. 3. elſe you are loſt for Eternity, and now judge what comforting Evidence you have got of this, if you were to look Death at this preſent Hour in the Face. 4. Is any thing more plain and expreſs, than this is from the Scripture, that to ſuch as are ſaved, the truth of the Goſpel, and of a *crucified Chriſt is the Power and the Wiſdom of God*? 1. *Cor.* 1. 24 and have you this Witneſs to bear from undoubted Experience, that you have got ſuch a Sight of the drawing Power and Beauty of Jeſus Chriſt in the offer of the Goſpel, that paſſeth natural Underſtanding as hath determined your conſent to the furtheſt to embrace ſo invaluable a Bargain, though it ſhould be at the Rate to *ſell all* to make ſuch a Purchaſe, *Matth.* 13. 46. 5. It is expreſs and clear from the Scripture, that with a converted State there alſo is known a ſpiritual Light and *diſcerning of the Things that are freely given us of* God, 1. *Cor.* 2. 12. which they never knew before; yea, that there is no middle State betwixt theſe two, of *being tranſlated out of the Darkneſs* of Nature *into that marvellous Light* of the Goſpel, which then ſhineth in upon the Soul, when once that bleſſed Day of Converſion hath begun to dawn. 1. *Pet.* 2. 9. And now can you upon ſureſt Trial, *put to your Seal that God is true* herein? 6. Hath the Scripture left this either doubtful or dark in the leaſt, that *to ſuch as believe Jeſus Chiſt is precious*? 1. *Pet.* 2. *ver.* 7. he hath got their Love, hath gained their Heart and Conſent to *be henceforth no more their own, but Chriſts*, 1. *Cor.* 6. 19. and here to take up their Reſt never to part, which

muſt not want ſome Trial, if the World, or if Tribulation or Diſtreſs will part them with his *Love*. Now bring this near your Thoughts what you know of ſuch a Mark. 7. Is it not clear, that with a converted State *the War is then begun* that will never ceaſe here, *betwixt the Fleſh and the Spirit*, *Gal.* 5. 17. and as the regenerate Part is at an advantage, the more vigorous is its oppoſition then againſt the Fleſh; yea againſt ſuch ſecret and ſpiritual Evils that may lie moſt near, from their natural Temper and Conſtitution, as their right Eye, or right Hand, *Matth.* 5. 29. 8. Is it not with a renewed State by Grace this then muſt be known, what the Spiritual way of Service to God in the beauties of Worſhip is, in the *newneſs of the Spirit, and not in the oldneſs of the Letter*, *Rom.* 7. 6. yea to know in ſome meaſure the *Spirit of Prayer*, which ſo ſenſibly *helpeth the Infirmities of the Saints*, *Rom.* 8. 26. and what have you thus found to anſwer ſo plain an Evidence and Mark as this, of your State and being in Chriſt? 9. Is there any thing dark or difficult here, that if you be *riſen with Chriſt*, this will natively reſult from the ſame *to ſeek the Things that are above? Col.* 3. 7. *that where your Treaſure is*, you will know then in ſome Meaſure *to have your Heart and Deſire* following, *Matth.* 6 21. And ſome comforting Converſe with the Thoughts of that Glory which is to come, yea a rejoycing in the hope thereof, when you ſhall breath in that ſweeter Air of the higher Paradiſe, where Love, Joy, and oneneſs of Heart with your bleſſed Head, and the whole triumphant Church there ſhall then never admit the ſmalleſt Interruption for all Eternity. Now are not theſe few *Marks* on ſuch clear

and

and undeniable Scripture grounds, as it is ſtrange what ſhould make this a dark Buſineſs to any, who would not make it their Choice to hold faſt Deceit, or go down with a Lie in their right Hand to the Grave, though the comforting and clear Evidence thereof be not the ſame at all times, nor in the ſame meaſure and alike to all.

QUEST. VI. *Since there is no queſtioning the Truth and Evidence of ſuch Marks, where the Scriptures are ſo clear, I would deſire to know alſo, what length is that which ſome may come in a temporary Work, and a being an almoſt Chriſtian, which is not ſaving; ſince this is my greateſt Intereſt within Time, who know not how ſoon the Night cometh?*

ANSW. You have that ſure and unerring Record of the Scripture to go to, where you may clearly ſee. 1. What a length there is in *a form of Knowledge, Rom.* 2. *v.* 20. and *a form of Godlineſs without Power.* 2. *Tim.* 3. *v.* 5. Yea that this may be in a high Meaſure; and was not *Judas* one of the Twelve? 2. It is there you may ſee, they have begun in the *Spirit* who have ended in the *Fleſh, Gal.* 3. 3. and what length ſuch came *who received the Seed of the Word,* and had ſome diſcernable growth a little, yea *forthwith ſprung up. Matth.* 13. *ver.* 5, 6. *Part of which was choked with theſe Thorns of the Cares of the World, and others did quickly wither and go back, when Perſecution aroſe, having no ſolid Root.* A Scripture which ſhould be much thought on, and deeply laid to Heart by all who would not be deceived about a Heaven and Bleſſedneſs for ever. 3. You may ſee there likewiſe what Length the *fooliſh Virgins* came, *Matth.* 25. 8, 9. Who wanted not a *Lamp* and viſible Profeſſion before

others, as might gain a Name and Teſtimony in their Day, and yet ſhut out for ever. 4. The Scripture will let you ſee alſo what eminent Gifts, even Spiritual may be reached by a common Work of the Spirit, where Converſion was never known, *Lord have have we not Propheſied in thy Name, Matth.* 22. 7. Yea that extraordinary Inſpiration is no infallible Evidence of Sanctification. As in that ſtrange Inſtance of Balaam. 5. That ſome may *cry unto God, and make mention of his Name, but not in Truth,* you may read *Eſai.* 48. 1. 6. *That there is a glorying in Appearance, and not in Heart,* you may ſee 2. *Cor.* 5. 12. Nor is it ſtrange to ſee this at ſuch a height, as with *Jehu,* to invite the World to ſee their *Zeal for the Lord,* and to enquire at others, *if their Heart be right,* whilſt his own was moſt falſe, and unſtraight. The World is no Stranger to this, what Length of a Profeſſion hath been to maſk a private Intereſt with ſuch a ſhew of Appearance: But let us conſider theſe alſo. 1. That nothing is here either to wound or affright the leaſt of the Saints, who are in earneſt how to be ſaved, ſince Truth in the inward Parts is that great Thing which the Holy God regards, and takes Pleaſure in, and a few Grains of this weigh down many Talents of outward Performances; *Let the Righteous ſtill hold on in his Way, and he that hath clean Hands wax ſtronger and ſtronger, Job* 17. 9. 2. It is a Length that none comes whoſe Heart is not in ſome meaſure ſincere before the Lord, to have their Salvation through Chriſt lie ſo near, as to be under ſome Fears and Tremblings leſt they be deceived therein, ſo as they dare make a humble reference to the God of Truth. *Search me and try wherein there*

may

may be any Deceit or Falſhood, and lead me in a right Way, Pſal. 139. 23. 24. For if thus their *Heart condemn them not, they may have Confidence then before God,* 1. *Joh.* 3. 21. 3. What ever hath been the furtheſt Length of Mens deceiving the World and themſelves at once concerning their Religion, yet can it not put the leaſt Blot on the ſpotleſs Way of the Lord, and nothing doth the Scripture more dreadfully threaten, than any ſuch falſe ſhew; yea it is there you may ſee this in its true Colours, and how horrid it is, and the more it doth approach to Religion (which is pure and undefiled) the more hateful and loathſome it is, ſo as even ſuch as comply therewith in themſelves, yet are enforced to loath it in others.

QUEST. VII. *Though I am conſtrained to aſſent and ſubject to the Truth in what you have ſpoke, ſince there is no flying before it, yet may it not be ſafe to admit ſome Delay a little, whilſt Men are in Health, and Strength of their Years, yea have ſo much oft to throng them from their neceſſary Concerns in the World, and lay this over until Age and Sickneſs may give more freedom, for being in ſuch earneſt about Salvation, whilſt it is not a laying the ſame aſide, without ſome ſettled Reſolution to follow it in a fit Time?*

ANSW. Do but take ſo much Time now as to reaſon thus with your ſelf, and then judge, whether it can be ſafely deferred, which, 1. Is *the one neceſſary Thing*; and is not an Eternity of ſuch Weight, that if there were many Ages enſured to us, much more a few Days, which are wholly uncertain, here were enough to keep us in ſome continued Throng. It is ſure, either Heaven and a Glory there for ever, and

truth

truth of a Hell and everlaſting Torment muſt be to ſuch but a Dream, and a conjectural Thing, elſe there could be no poſſible quiet without a knowing where they muſt dwell for ever. 2. Can this be deferred whilſt we ſee Time makes ſuch ſwift diſpatch, and that it is ſure, while we now live and breath, we are a *dying*, and hath it in ſome degrees begun, and advanced every Hour of our Life? and Oh! ſhould *dying* Men keep at a diſtance from the Thoughts of Death, who ſo oft may hear it ſound, and the Bell ringing for others? 3. Can this admit a *Delay* to ſuch, were it but for ſome few Days or Hours, who cannot poſſibly be ſecured when they lie down at Night, but their Breath may be ſtopped by a ſudden Surprize of Death ere they awake; yea thus ſleeps at an adventure of being ere the next Day in an irrecoverably loſt State? 4. Can there be a *Delay* here by ſuch, who knows not only the Night is coming, when none can Work, but ſo uncertain, if the firſt touch of Sickneſs and approach of Death be not a Lethargy, wherein they can neither know, nor reflect on their own Caſe, which I have known remarakably to have befallen ſome, who uſed to make ſuch an Account, they would take Religion to Heart when once they were dying? 5. Is it not needful ſuch have the Work of their Day put by in the Seaſon thereof, without a daring to lay it over; when to be ſick and die is ſo great and ſolemn a Work by it ſelf? 6. Was it not then too late for the *fooliſh Virgins*, to ariſe and beſtir themſelves, when they had loſt their Seaſon of the Goſpel, or to make ready upon a *Midnight* Cry, when they had ſlept the Time of their Work and Duty, and is not this put upon Record by

the

the Holy Ghoſt, for all after Ages; *that they may be ready with their Loyns girded, and their Lamps burning*, who know that Death certainly is before them, and know not but that it come as a Thief in the Night? 7. Could they have an Hour's quiet, if their Eyes were once opened to ſee that horrible Pit they lie into of a Natural State, and what they are eſtranged from, of that bleſſed State of a Chriſtian? But Oh! How little is this either underſtood or believed.

QUEST. VIII. *I confeſs I muſt either ſhut my Eyes, or admit the certainty of theſe Things, to preſs a preſent ſeriouſneſs in making ſure work for Heaven: But what you touched laſt of Mens not underſtanding the State they are in, puts me to a new Enquiry, if this can be meant of ſuch as live under the Light of the Goſpel, yea Converſe with the ſame Truths that others do, for what can the moſt diſcerning Chriſtian ſee further in Scripture Truths, than ſuch as exerciſe their Reaſon and Judgment about them as well as they: And what are theſe Things that they have got a Sight of, which thoſe who are in the State of Nature, are wholly Strangers unto?*

ANSW. You know that it is no Words can tell what a Thing Day-light is to them that never knew it, which can only be known by its own Evidence; nor is it poſſible to give an Account in another way of a Spiritual diſcerning the Things of God, which not in degree but kind is as far above the Light of Nature and Reaſon, as that of the Sun is above a Candle. O what another Thing is a ſpiritual Acquaintance with the Things themſelves held forth in the Scripture, than any Notions or knowledge of the Doctrine thereof, which may enable to talk or diſpute, whilſt the Power and Efficacy thereof was ne-

ver known on the Soul; yea nor the writing of the Law upon the Heart; and to *learn the Truth as it is in Jesus, Ephes.* 4. 21. But for answer to your Proposal, I shall tell you in a few Words what such are admitted to see, yea are perswaded of the undoubted Certainty thereof, whilst others neither know nor see what they see, but are wholly Strangers thereto. 1. The Excellency and Loveliness of their beloved Master, so as to them there is but one *Christ* in Heaven and in Earth, whose Room none can fill but himself, yea can give that Answer to such as enquire, *he is altogether lovely*; that he is their beloved, with whom none, none may offer to come in competition, *Cant.* 5. 16. 2. They see and know *a reconciled God in Christ* with that assured Evidence, as sometimes no Cloud is betwixt Heaven and their Soul, with that sensible intimation of Pardon and Acceptance, as they are at the furthest sure, they see, feel and enjoy, what is not possible to express to others. 3. It is not *that marvellous Light* only breaks then in, at their first Entry into a Spiritual State, but there is a Sight sometimes a Christian hath of Scripture Truths, and breaking up of some further Discovery there to their Soul, that if they would give all the World, they cannot have at other Times. 4. Such know assuredly the truth of a *new Nature*, which is so wonderful, and wholly a supernatural Thing, wherewith natural Reason can have no Acquaintance, nor is it strange how much others are in the dark as to this, who know so little of their own Soul what it means, except by the Power and Operations thereof. 5. Do you ask what such know or discern in the Things of God to which most are Strangers? they see the *Glory and*

Beauty

Beauty of Holiness, the truth of Spiritual Things, which is the hidden Things of God in a Mystery, 1. *Cor.* 2. 7. yea thus are taken in to see these great Things, not in a Notion thereof, but in their Spiritual Nature, as they are sealed with Power and Efficacy on their Soul? 6. It is given to such to know also, (which the Spirit only can reveal and teach,) what a sweet Accord there is in these *Depths* of Providence betwixt the Christians Cross and their Comfort, their being *cast down, yet not destroyed, to be sorrowful, yet always rejoycing, yea in having nothing, yet to possess all Things.* And are not these such Things that could never possibly have entred into Mens Thoughts, if they were not made known in a supernatural way? It is true, the furthest that any of the Saints know here is but in Part, yea many a dark and sad overclouding are such oft under. O if the most discerning of natural Men could know what such are with that certainty perswaded of, as they are of their own Being.

QUEST. IX. *These are great Things you speak of, but since I have such cause to know, what Influence and Power the Things of this Earth have, which lies so near our external Senses: Could I be as fully perswaded of the certainty of these supernatural Truths, and Enjoyments of a Spiritual Life, to be sure and undoubted Realities, as what I touch and feel; I think then I had got the World much under my Feet, yea in another manner should look on the strange Madness and Distraction of most this Day, whose continued Work is how to grasp after a Shadow; whilst they have no Heart or Desire for what is the Christians Choice. I press this the more, since it is sure, one cannot be thoroughly perswaded of the truth of Spiritual Things as greatest Realities, and that there is a*

Grace and Life of Grace here, but they muſt be to the furtheſt ſure of that Life of Glory, which is to come.

Answ. It is ſtrange, how ſuch as look but at a Diſtance, are not dazzled more with Amazement at the Report of theſe great Things of Religion, and what Chriſtians have in hope before them; but not to loſe Time, let me beſeech your bringing theſe near your Thoughts, when you are alone. 1. That it is an *Argument of Power*, not of Words, which can fully quiet the Soul of a Chriſtian concerning this. 2. you may but judge what a ſad part that of the Saints were, if in this life their *hope* were only, or what could poſſibly be comforting to moſt in ſuch a Day, whoſe Griefs are in earneſt, if the Truth and Comforts of a Spiritual Life ſhould be a doubtful Thing to them. 3 What Gain or Intereſt could any ſuch poſſibly have to deſign a falſe Witneſs and Teſtimony, yea, with ſuch aſſured Confidence, from Experience, if they were not at the furtheſt certainty thereof; yea thus to converſe ſo much in the Duties of Godlineſs, where you ſee they cannot be but a Toil to the Fleſh, if the Peace of God, and Joy and Comforts of the Spirit were but a naked ſhew? For this were to render themſelves both deſperately wicked and miſerable at once, without any Profit. Or what think you would make the affectionate Parents preſs ſo much Seriouſneſs in following the Lord on their Children, and thus put them on ſo ſad a Bargain, whom they ſo dearly love, if they knew it not to be their true Intereſt here and for ever? 4. You know the Doctrine of the Goſpel is a Doctrine of Holineſs, whither the whole of that bleſſed Contrivance doth moſt natively reſolve. And is not the Truth hereof writ forth in

ſuch

ſuch viſible Realities before your Eyes, as it may be no leſs manifeſt in its *Examples* than *Precepts*? I hope there is no debating here. 5. It is ſure, the Diſcoveries of the Word do not direct Men to Things afar off, but to ſuch as brings the great Things of the Goſpel *near*, even into their Heart, ſo as to handle and feel by Experience the Truth thereof; and you know the Conſolation of the Spirit is not by Words, but by *Things*, giving into the Soul a Spiritual and ſenſible Experience of the Reality thereof, and of the *Love of Jeſus Chriſt* let forth to them. 6. And are not theſe marvellous Effects and Operations of the Spirit of God, in ſubduing the Soul by Grace, ſo as to embrace an afflicted Lot and Tribulation for the Goſpel, to *take joyfully the ſpoiling of their Goods*, yea to diſp their Hands in the blood of a beloved Sin, and find Delight thus in doing Violence to the Fleſh, ſuch as may ſhew that it is ſure, Chriſtians muſt know and enjoy, what they and moſt of the World are Strangers to? And is it not above Nature, or the furtheſt of human reach to learn to be *Meek*, *Humble*, *Lowly*, *Patient in Suffering*, *and Self-denying*? 7. Such have loſt a Spiritual Taſte, or never had it, who know nothing of that incomparable ſweetneſs, which is in ſecret Converſe with God; that thus there is not a claim only to that glorious State which is above, but the *firſt Fruits* and *earneſt* ſo real, as will change the very Countenance after ſome ſpecial Times of near Fellowſhip with Jeſus Chriſt, ſo as in the greateſt Compoſure, they can ſay, I ſurely *feel*, *I enjoy*, *and am ſure*, for the Truth thereof. 8. What frequent tranſports of Joy and Delight have been in Chriſtians extremeſt Sufferings for the Truth, yea ſometimes

after a dark and dismal Cloud over their Soul? And why do not Men enquire what should this mean, or how such a Thing were possible, if they had not got a Sight, that could look them out of Pain and Trouble? Let me but further add, how strange, (but yet I hope no rare or unusual Sight) is that of the *outward Man decaying* or mouldering down to the Grave, when the *inward Man* is more discernably strong and vigorous, than in Times of greatest Health?

QUEST. X. *I make not this Question here to debate, but to be further confirmed in the certainty of the Truth, which is the greatest Joy Men can have on the Earth, but I must confess, the greatness of these Things is such, as may put the most Established to a stand; yea is it a small Business to be under such a Call to embrace and accept of Jesus Christ in the offer of the Gospel, and in him of a Crown of Glory that fadeth not away, and is there not cause of fear for such as I am, to adventure here, which is so high, and far above what I can possibly think of?*

ANSW. This must be matter of Astonishment and Wondering for all Eternity, and it were well, if such an Exercise were more begun here, to enquire and wonder at what we know of the great Truths of the *Gospel*; but it is sure, it were the highest of Pride, not Humility, to hold back where the holy God calls; or for a perishing Man not to throw out his Arms and swim to a *Rock*, when it is before his Eyes, and is not the *Gospel* such a Contrivance, as the whole of the Saints since the beginning could not possibly have a Wish beyond the same, to shew forth that marvellous Condescendence, freedom and plainess which is there, yea where none can be affrighted away who with

with desire did ever follow to this blessed way. But since this is of such Concern, not for a Christians Peace and Personal Encouragement only, but to bear Witness to the blessed Way of the Lord, and shew how desperate an Opposition theirs must be, whose Hearts are not melted and gained by such inexpressible Tenderness and *Condescendance* of the Gospel; let me speak these few Words. 1. You know that such this is, as none can come wrong, if they *come* but in truth upon such an errand, as the felt *need* of Jesus Christ: And therefore is the Scripture so express here, *Joh.* 6. 37. *And whosoever cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out, says he who is faithful and true*, yea such as the whole of the Scripture doth remarkably shew, see *Rev.* 22. 17. *And whosoever will, let him come and take of the Waters of Life.* 2. Such is his way, on whom the alone weight of his Peoples Interest and Salvation leans, as he both forms the Desire of the Souls of his People, and satisfies the same; nor can there be in truth a *hungring* and desire after him, but their Enjoyment is thus begun, *Matth.* 5. *verse* 6. 3. What can be more *Condescending*, than his way is to the lowest, whose Soul doth but in a serious *look* follow, when it is in truth, when there is almost no more can be reached, *Esai.* 45. 22. if thus the Heart be but laid open to seek a Relief in him, yea to *look as afar off* to that, even to which they fear to approach. 4. And is not such his way, that the greatest Thing he most expressly requires in the saddest case of felt and discovered Guilt, is to *flee* in but for shelter to him from that dreadful pursuit of an awakened Conscience? Yea how marvellous is this, that as their Face is towards the *Gospel*, there is the most sensible inlet

to

to *Contrition* and brokeness of Heart, and serious exercise of Repentance, which as a sweet and native result follows thereon? O! what is given for the furtherest clearing hereof in the Scripture? See *Zach.* 12. 10. *Act.* 5. 31. 5. Such is his way, as he hath come under Bond and Promise by his Faithfulness to make forthcoming to his People, which is only of Grace, he hath promised to give what he requires, yea *to work their Works in them, as well as for them, Esai.* 26. 12. 6. Such is his Condescendence, that his Peoples Security should lean on nothing in themselves, not on their own *apprehending, but being apprehended, Phil* 3. 12. Yea that when any of his People, broken under the Sense of guilt have no Argument to make use of, or Confidence to adventure, he finds them one in himself. *Hos.* 13. 9. *O Israel thou hast destroyed thy self, but in me is thy Help.* 7. Such is his way, where there is no exception of Persons, but the Poor made most dearly welcome, and brought near in his offer; *when the Proud*, were they the greatest Monarchs in the Earth, *he knows afar off.* 8. This is he, and such is his blessed way, as the severity of the Law must serve for that very end, to commend *Jesus Christ* and lead in to him, and the felt weight of Sin bring a begun Cure and Relief therewith in the felt need of a Saviour, *Matth.* 11 *v* 28. 9. Such is his blessed way, as yet *did never break a bruised Reed nor quench a smoaking Flax, Esai.* 42. *v.* 3. Nor put such back, whose fear to adventure made them to stand afar off, with the poor *Publican, Luk.* 18. 13. Yea of whom, all who ever knew him must bear him this Witness, he is tender and compassionate in his sharpest Reproofs; and when he wounds soreſt,

then

then is it *that he doth moſt earneſtly remember with the ſounding of his Bowels towards them, Jer.* 31. 20. 10. Such is he, and his way towards his Church here upon the Earth, as he hath given ſome peculiar Lines in his Word, of his tender Regard to ſuch, even beyond others, who are moſt *deſtitute* of outward help, *Pſal.* 146 *v.* 7, 8, 9. *Pſal.* 40. *laſt.* And comes ſo low to take in thoſe that are moſt rejected of others, and may have leaſt Notice or Regard at the Time, and therefore, when he was himſelf on the Earth, he was *called a Friend of Publicans and Sinners, Matt.* 11. 19. 11. Such is his way, whoſe Peace and Acceptance hath ſo oft met his People, as a bleſſed Surpriſal, when they knew leaſt how to adventure, and then given them a moſt unexpected Welcome, when they have been under the greateſt Fears, *Pſal.* 18 4. and 116. 3, 4. *Luk.* 15. 20. 12. Such is his way and marvellous *Condeſcendance*, where Mercy gets a Preference to *Sacrifice, Matth.* 9. *v.* 13. Where the Widow's *Mite* gives more in a little, than theſe of a great Eſtate with much, being in ſingleneſs of Heart thus given for the Lord. *Luk.* 21. 3. Yea where one half of the Chriſtians Work is in a right and ſerious Aim therein, and *is accepted according to that a Man hath, and not according to what he hath not,* 2. *Cor.* 8. 12. I ſhall but further add on ſo great a Subject, that ſuch is his way towards his People, as he not only calls, but *cauſeth* their Soul to approach to him, by an inward touch of his Power thereon; yea this moſt diſcernably, when nothing elſe hath been left but to pray, and roll over their Caſe on his bleſſed Hand.

QUEST. XI. *Theſe are great Things you ſpeak of,*

and it is ſure, muſt be to ſuch as ever knew what a wounded Soul is, under the tender Hand of this bleſſed Healer; but for that you have laſt mentioned of ſuch a Call and Acceſs for Chriſtians to pray; yea that aſſuredly the Prayers of ſuch on Earth go up to Heaven, and are heard and accepted there, ſo as at all Times, and under every Weight and Preſſure, we may come and preſent our Requeſts to the glorious God, who lives and ſees. This, I muſt ſay, ſeems to me one of the moſt marvellous Things in practical Religion, yea hath put me to a ſtand, how Men who are ſo much taken, as in a Tranſport, with ſome ſingular Experiment in Nature, yet have ſuch ordinary Thoughts of this, if they be perſwaded of its Truth.

ANSW. This is marvellous indeed, though the way of moſt ſeem to bring it under debate, if *Prayer* be any thing more than ſome empty Form or a piece of Invention, rather than ſo great and ſerious a Buſineſs; But I hope you know, 1 That none ever was called to take this on Truſt, or implicitly credit the Teſtimony of others, but there is a ſolemn Appeal here to every ones perſonal *Trial*, for the truth and certainty hereof. 2. That it is with the firſt being of Chriſtians, and when once a Spiritual Life is formed in the Soul, how *Prayer* then is as their natural Work, like the tendency and breathing of the Child after the Breaſts. 3. And is, it not clear that ſuch have got a new Acquaintance, and muſt know another *Society* than Men, to make their Retirements ſweet and deſirable; yea that continued haunt and reſort to this bleſſed way, ſhews the truth of Commerce and trading with another World, is known to ſuch with the greateſt of certainty? 4. Do but judge what could be poſſibly comforting to a Chriſtian, when

when the lower Springs of their Encouragements are ſo viſibly ſhut up, if this *Spring* and Paſſage were not open and tried in their ſureſt Experience. Is it eaſy to rejoyce, and be comforted, when all Things without do moſt remarkably frown, or to bear chearfully out in ſuch a Day, when they may be preſſed above meaſure, if there were not ſuch Joys the World knows not of? And how the Chriſtians Midnight *Songs* under the Croſs, have been oft ſweeter than in any Times of their outward Proſperity; does it not witneſs, that it's no naked Form or Shew could ever anſwer to this? 5. And when you ſee ſuch diſcernable Advantage ſome of the Followers of God in their Day have beyond others, yea ſometimes beyond themſelves, in a vigorous and tender Chriſtian Walk; could this be but further followed: How eaſy were it to find, that thoſe are they, who are moſt in the Work and Exerciſe of *Prayer*, which hath ſo cloſe an Intercourſe with the *vitals* of Chriſtianity; nor can ever one Inſtance be given of one's flouriſhing and being fruitful in the way of God, and not much under the Ground in this Exerciſe, which is moſt an internal Thing, where the loudeſt Cry to Heaven maketh oft the leaſt Noiſe.

QUEST. XII. *Theſe I confeſs, are clear, but what would moſt help to make this Duty both comforting and eaſy, whilſt there is ſuch Difficulty to many, how to expreſs themſelves this way, and others find it a ſore wearineſs to the Fleſh, yea leſs eaſy to be thus alone, and take ſome Time for ſecret Prayer, than to wait on Publick Duties, or joyn with others in ſuch a Work?*

ANSW. I hope you know, 1. That as our tye to the Publick Duties of Worſhip is great and indiſpen-

ſible, to improve Fellowſhip with others in the Exerciſes of Godlineſs, yet moſt of a Chriſtian and his Work, is that which is leaſt ſeen, and lies hid from the view of others; yea the moſt weighty Duties of Chriſtianity are the more retired and ſecret Duties thereof, ſo that a true meaſure of a Chriſtian, muſt not be from what he is in Publick, and Converſe with others, but what he is *alone*, where he lies open to his witneſs, who ſearcheth the Heart. 2. Such can only blame themſelves, and are ſadly eſtranged from the truth of Godlineſs, if they know nothing elſe, but to be alone in their Retirements, who are then called to an immediate Fellowſhip with God in Chriſt, and to know the Truth thereof on trial. 3. You know a natural Motion is eaſy, and without conſtraint, and were this once underſtood, how Prayer is a Soul work, and to be carried forth from inward Principles of a new Nature, then what was a ſore Toil here, becomes their ſweeteſt Delight; for to pray, is not an expreſſing to the Lord what ſhould be one's Deſires, but a preſent breathing of the Soul in Deſires after him; when the Pleaſure of Religion is ſo known with the Power and Life thereof. 4. The more Weight and Burden of the Chriſtians Caſe on himſelf, is a tried help for more facility and Life in the work of Prayer. O what ſweet and refreſhing Hours have ſome had and preſſing Burdens oft helped Chriſtians to, which they ſhould not have known otherwiſe? 5. The more frequency and continuance cauſeth true Delight and Freedom in this Exerciſe, as the wearing out and neglect of this Duty will quickly wear ſuch out of any Delight there, yea to make them diſreliſh any other Part of Religion.

QUEST. XIII. *But is it not ſore to continue in Prayer, when there is no viſible Return; yea that after moſt ſenſible and felt acceſs in this Duty, there ſeems oft a thicker Darkneſs to follow?*

ANSW. It is not ſtrange, though this be a Trial indeed; yea ſometimes in a more than ordinary way ſearching, which put the Faith of ſo great and eſtabliſhed a Man to this ſtand, as to cry out *Pſal.* 69. 3. *I am weary with my crying, my Throat is dry, while I wait for my God.* But let us conſider therewith. 1. That through the whole of the Scripture, it is ſo clear to be the Lords uſual way to confirm before he try, yea to follow the greateſt confirmations of his Peoples Faith, with ſome remarkably ſharp *Trials.* 2. The waiting Chriſtian could yet never ſay, a Return came too late, but in the moſt fit and opportune Seaſon, even when it hath been longeſt deferred. How ſtrange would theſe ſeem, yet moſt ſweetly accord. *Luk.* 18. 7, 8. *Though he bear long, yet will he avenge ſpeedily?* 3. Is it a ſmall thing to be *anſwered with ſtrength in your Soul*; and for being helped to wait, until the outgate more fully break up, ſince a Divine Power may be no leſs marvellouſly ſeen in the Chriſtians Support, than in the moſt aſtoniſhing Delivery? 4. Is not a ſubdued Spirit, with a humble reſignation to the Lord under a long deferred hope, a higher Mercy, when truly conſidered, than the Thing it ſelf which we moſt follow? And are theſe loſers, where thus more is given, than what they either ſought or hoped for. 5. Is not this the ſureſt way to make haſt by waiting, and the choiceſt mean to gain Time, and bring a Chriſtian and his deſire ſooneſt together? Which was the Witneſs of a

moſt experienced Chriſtian, *I have with much longing ſought ſuch a Thing from the Lord, yet got no Return, but when once I was helped through Grace to reſign wholly to his Will, then was it he gave me my Will alſo in what I had ſought?* 6. The more Prayer and wreſtling hath come betwixt the Chriſtians Trial and Deliverance, is it not found the more comforting and ſweet, when it hath come? that whilſt *hope deferred makes the Heart ſick*, yet how great an Intereſt does it pay in for the furtheſt Loſs and Pain in waiting, when as a *Tree of Life*, it hath at laſt bloſſomed after many a Winter Storm? 7 *His Thoughts are not as ours, and his Way not as ours Eſai.* 55. *verſ.* 9. We ſee not at preſent nor can fathom the Depths of Divine Providence, and how needful it is to have the Heart brought low, that not only *Patience might have its perfect Work, Jam.* 1. 4, but a Chriſtians being more fitted for the deſired Mercy. 8. But what do you expect, which is not of free and marvellous Grace? For to continue in Prayer is an expreſſy commanded Duty, though no ſenſible Fruit, or Income ſhould follow, yea can bring no Price in its Hand, to obtain what we ſeek. And ſhould theſe quarrel with waiting, who have all this kept in their Sight, *I am not worthy of the leaſt of the Mercies thou haſt ſhewed to thy Servant, Gen.* 32. 10? 9. Could we ever know the uſe and comfort of theſe great Promiſes to *waiters*, ſuch as *Eſai.* 30 *ver.* 18. that 40. *v.* 31. *Pſal.* 25. *ver.* 3. If Grace were not thus kept in exerciſe.

DIA.

DIALOGUE II.

QUESTION. I.

SINCE we ſhould find our Delight moſt, where our true Intereſt and greateſt Concerns lie; the late Occaſion we had to Converſe together on ſo neceſſary and weighey a Subject, doth preſs me to follow the ſame yet further, and to gain ſuch an Hour, when ſo many are unprofitably loſt; and now let me ſeriouſly aſk, may there not be a ſafe owning of ſome more looſe Conception of Practical Religion, than what you have hitherto ſpoke ſeems to allow, ſince it ſeems very ſad and affrighting to look on ſo great a part of thoſe, who own the Doctrine of the Church, if there be not ſome greater Latitude for Chriſtians, both in their Principles and Practice, yea whilſt this wants not many Patrons in the preſent Time?

ANSWER.

It is not ſtrange, where the Truth is not received in Love, that Men kindle a Light to themſelves, and walk in the Sparks thereof, But I hope you debate not the Scripture, where the ſafe way of being eternally ſaved can only be known; yea it is ſure, could we make this way more large and broad, there were no conceivable Intereſt or Gain to conceal the ſame, which were ſo pleaſing to moſt in theſe Times. But ſince there is *one Way*, and here alone

muſt

must all the redeemed of the Lord get safe to that blessed Land which is above, I hope you dare own no other Conception thereof, than is there expresly shewed. 1 That it is such, where there is no possible *Latitude* for shifting off Fear, Tenderness and Diligence in our Christian Walk, and thus to make sure for eternal Life. 2. That this is the *strait and narrow Way*, where the Multitude is not to be found, even of such as are under the outward Call of the Gospel; and it is sure, another Way will never be found to the second coming of Christ. *Luk.* 13. *v.* 24. 3. Such, as there can be no following the Lord there with a hid reserve, or regarding Iniquity in the Heart. *Psal.* 66. 18. or a cleaving to any private Interest, so as to keep it up deliberately, and not adventure the same for Jesus Christ, were it as their *right Eye, or right Hand*, *Matth.* 5. 29. 4. There is no possible conception of Religion Men can have from the Scripture, to take off that indispensible necessity of the *new Birth*, and writing of the Law upon the Heart by the Spirit of God, yea thus to know Religion as an internal Thing, which must first begin at the Heart, before it come to the Practice, *Joh* 3. 3. 5. It is beyond debate also, that Men must bring not their Work only, but their Thoughts and Principles of their Motion to that Test of the *Law*, which is Holy and Spiritual, *Matth.* 5. 28. and that what be done, it be from Integrity and uprightness of Heart. But it is strange, what is there to enforce any to this, when such is the Way of the Lord, that if there could be a Latitude for a Change, I am sure, none ever who knew it on Trial, could have a Wish or Desire beyond what it is, nor is it possible for any to know

know the spirituality and power of Religion, and not know that sweetness and facility, that is thus in following thereof.

Qu II. *I cannot debate such clear and evident Truths, though it may be matter of Astonishment to see, what essayes are by many, to oppose not only the Power and Spirituality of Religion in its practice, but in its principles also. But what do you mean by the delights and sweetness thereof, you have now Spoke? Is it not from what is in hope, and in another World, but not here ..... Enjoyment; since you know what prejudice is every w[illegible] against this way, yea nothing seems more Sad and Afflicting than the Christian life within time, so as it is not conceiveable oft what can be comforting in their Lot?*

Answ. This Question, though Strange and Amazing in it self, yet is not for such as look but at a distance on the Truth of Godliness that lyes so hid and deep upon the Soul, and to whom a Christians life is indeed a mistery, but I Judge it be not easy even for such to shift off, or get hid from their Eyes the Truth of these things, which so clearly shew the alone sweet and desireable lot within time, must be that of a serious Christian, whatever the World be to him; with which. 1 The greatest Princes. the Rich, and those that have lived most in the pleasures of this Life, would be glad to Die and joyn interests then 2, Is such, as hath made it sweet and easy, yea on deliberat choice to many, to quite their greatest interest and Comforts within time; which Flesh and Blood could never have parted with, if the *Exchange* had not been known to be much more gainful. 3. How desirable is that *Lot*, where the

Chriſtian can follow his intereſt, by being *abaſed* as well as *abounding*, and by every thing that doth occurre, may know how to be furthered thus in his way; yea riſe by that which would moſt ſeem to bear him down, and lay him in the duſt; yea thus to gain by greateſt loſſes. 4. Such is the Chriſtians Lot, that as his Duty and Comfort can never part, or the Teſtimony of his Conſcience anent integrity and ſtraitneſs ceaſe to be matter of his rejoicing, ſo a ſerious Subjecting and Reſignation to the Lord will never ceaſe to be his reward alſo in the cloſe. 5. How ſad and afflicting this Lot may oft ſeem, it is here alſo their *Joy* is Sown by Weeping, where that Seed was never yet loſt. *Pſal.* 126. 5. 6. Would you truely know the ſweetneſs of a Chriſtian lot? O do but come near and *try*, what Joy and Satisfaction is to be found in the Cottage of ſuch as know the Truth of living near GOD, and under the lively hope of the Glory which is to be revealed, more than in the moſt ſtately and magnifick dwellings of others; what the Mornings and Evenings of many ſuch are, their hid and retired Walks, yea their Comforts ſometimes in the Night Seaſon; how ſweet to tell the Hours, as they are going by, which they know are bringing them more near to the Eternity of Joy, and putting over ſome part of their appointed Griefs here; with what refreſhment theſe can look up to the Heavens, to the Sun, Moon and Stars, and triumph in the Works of his Hand, who hath formed the ſame, whilſt they know what a marvellous change ere long ſhall be in their State, when they ſhall be above theſe, yea *ſhine forth as the Sun in the Kingdom of their Father*, Matth. 13. v. 43.

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Hath not such; and they only the most desirable part even here, yea can truly Feast upon their Brown Bread, with a Satisfaction, beyond whatever the Voluptuous man knew, who knows not that true Peace and Serenity of mind in Jesus Christ, which guards the heart from that dreadful sting that follows on the Pleasures of Sin? It is such can truly say (which was the Word of one of the Ancients) *O quam suave est carere hisce suavitatibus, how sweet to him was it to want these carnal delights, wherein others were wallowing*; whilst their all is in Jesus Christ. But if you say, why is not this more discernable amongst Christians? is not the cause here, that a living and vigorous Christian is become so rare a Sight at this Day? 7. It is these, who with Joy can converse with the thoughts of approaching death, whilst the *sting* and *terrour* thereof is taken away. 8. It is these, who in the Serious observing of providences both to themselves and others needs look no where, where they may not see what should tend to further strengthening of them in the way of Truth, and that the God whom they serve, assuredly is what he hath declared himself to be. 9 It is these, who with greatest quiet dare commit their interest to him, as *knowing in whom they have believed*, and whatever confluence of manifold temptations may sometime meet in their Lot, yet knows they *shall not be tempted above measure*, but are still under his tender and watchful care, who even while he smites with one hand, does uphold with the other. 10. Such is their Lot; at that which would seem the greatest Pain in the Study of Godliness, which is by Mortification, to do violence to the Flesh and Lusts

thereof, leads in alſo the greateſt pleaſures and delights.

QUEST. III. *I muſt confeſs, it is ſtrange what prejudice moſt have at ſerious Godlineſs which they never knew upon Trial: But what you mean in this laſt Inſtance of that intereſt* Mortification *to the Fleſh hath, in the Comforts and Enjoyments of the Chriſtians Life, is ſuch I cannot eaſily comprehend.*

ANSW. This can alone be known upon Trial Yet do but ſeriouſly conſider theſe, 1. That the Scripture hath ſo expreſly conjoined them together. *Matth.* 11. 29. *Take my Yoke on you, and Learn of me, &c. and you ſhall find reſt to your Soul*, which would ſeem a ſtrange way to ſo deſirable an enjoyment. 2. You know this alſo to be Atteſted by the Saints in all Ages, and with the greateſt certainty of Trial, what inexpreſſible ſweetneſs and delight they have known and experienced in a ſuffering lot for Chriſt, and in ſuch things, which in themſelves were moſt imbittering and grievous to the *Fleſh* 3. None yet ever knew the Truth and Power of Religion, and not this alſo, that by a *natural* reſult, whatever tends to an Abatement of the power of Sin, in reſiſting thereto, how ſore and grieving ſoever it would ſeem at firſt leads into the greateſt Delights and Comfort in the cloſe. 4. It is here the Chriſtians promiſed reward to Wreſtling againſt Corruption, and a *Body of Death*, is in ſome degree given in, ſo as to know upon their own Soul the Truth of that *Peace*, which is in a cloſe Walking by this bleſſed rule of the Scripture. *Gal.* 6. 16. 5. And what a ſweet Jubilee hath oft followed in their Soul, on reſiſting and getting Victory over ſome predominant

evil,

evil, beyond whatever was known, in the furtheſt yeilding and indulgence to the Fleſh? 6. Is not the moſt truly Comforting uſe and enjoyment of the World found, by having the Heart much ſubdued thereto, and thus kept off that dreadful *rock of Love to the World*, and eager deſires after the ſame, whereon ſo many thouſands have at laſt made ſhipwrack?

QUEST. IV. *What are they not allowed deſires after the World; and that it is truly Warrantable for Men to ſeek a further increaſe to their Eſtate, and ſome larger intereſt this way?*

ANSW. Since this is an unqueſtionable *Talent* men have for their *Maſters* uſe, and are accountable for, it puts it beyond Queſtion, that there is both a Warrantable following and enjoying thereof, with Chriſtian Sobriety; but theſe alſo would be deeply pondered herewith. 1 That *Love to the World and things thereof*, is ſo expreſly a Scripture ſign of a reprobate State. 1 *Joh.* 2. 15, and that *no Covetous ſhall inherrit the Kingdom of Heaven*. 1 *Cor.* 6. 10. which was ſo convincing in the primitive times, as *Covetouſneſs* upon any viſible evidence was then a publick ſcandal of the Church. 2, How ſuch is the *deceitfulneſs* of riches, as is ſhewed by our bleſſed Lord himſelf- *Mat.* 13. *v.* 22 that as *briars and thornes* this native tendency is to *choak* the Word of the Goſpel, and make it unfruitful, even whilſt it ſeems to have come forward ſome Length. And if any cannot bear this, who may be in ſadeſt hazard to ſplit on ſuch a *Rock*, let them but go in and try the Scripture concerning it; and not think ſtrange, that we neither may nor dare conceal the Truth herein, without applying it to mens Conſcience.

QUEST. V. *What ſuitable improvement is that which is neceſſarily called for, of the meaſure and talent which Men have of things of the World, as might moſt tend to a ſolid peace and quiet of mind before the Lord herein, and to guard againſt ſuch dreadful and evident hazard of Eternal Periſhing, or ſpliting on that Rock, on which the Holy Ghoſt hath ſet ſo ſignal a* Beacon, *by moſt expreſs and multiplied warnings from the* Scripture?

ANSW. It is a great propoſal you now make, to which in a few Words, and with ſome Seriouſneſs I ſhall make this Anſwer. 1, To conſider what uſe ye would chooſe to make, or wiſh to have made of your intreſt in the World, if ye were at this Hour to *Dye*, ſo as with Peace on ſuch an Account to enter into Eternity. 2. That this is not left Arbitrary to any their Trading with ſuch a *Talent*, and be concerned how to Conſecrate the gain thereof to the Lord; but it is a High Piece of Juſtice, and no leſs neceſſity to ſhew Mercy to thoſe who are truly diſtreſſed, than to pay our *Debts*, ſince the great Lawgiver hath not left this indefferent more than the other, as is clear. *Luke* 16. 10, 11, 12. 3. You would conſider that *Riches* is given to Men as *Stewards*, and not *Proprietors*. *Matth.* 25. *v.* 14. I mean ſo as to reckon they may do herein at their own Pleaſure; and is unfaithfulneſs here a ſmall weight to lye on the Conſcience, and have no other Account of their *Maſters goods* to give, but that they applyed them to their own uſe only? 4. Do but lay to heart, that ſuch is this great Duty, in a faithful Anſwering to ones *Talent* and Meaſure of the things of the World, in a tender reſpect to the *Condition* and *Neceſſity of the Saints*, as in the Day of the Lord it is moſt noticed,

and

and that which will be brought in *Judgment* againſt the reprobate, yea on which that Dreadful *Sentence* there paſſeth, *depart from me ye Curſed into everlaſting Fire, &c. Matth.* 25. *v* 41. 5. To be faithful thus in Anſwering to that *Talent* is clear, that it is to give and lay out your ſelf this way, where you can expect no return, or Compenſation, otherwiſe it is but a ſelf intreſt you follow, and not a giving to the Lord, nor is it *a caſting thy Bread on the Waters. Eccleſ.* 11. 1. 6. To be faithful here is ſomething elſe than that occaſional *giving to the Neceſſities of any*, on ſome preſent and preſſing Object, ſince the *Scripture*, is ſo expreſs that here ſhould be ſome proportion to every ones Meaſure and Eſtate, which ought to be ſeriouſly conſidered and laid aſide, for which ſee that appointment. *Deut.* 14. 22. & 16 12. and how there it is held forth on moral and immutable Grounds. 1 *Cor.* 16 1. that every one ſhould, as his meaſure can admit, be concerned in the improvement thereof. 7. This is not to entertain only ſome preſſing call for this end. when it comes their way, but to ſearch out the cauſe of the diſtreſſed. *Job.* 29. *v.* 16. *Eccleſ.* 11. 2. for thus *the Liberal man deviſeth Liberal things, &c.* even in ſeeking Objects, that ſo excellent a grace may not want its Exerciſe, each according to his *Talent*, where it may be truly ſaid, they receive more than they can give: Which was a choice Word of one, *whatever I give, that I have*, whilſt the *withholding* of that which is thus required, hath viſibly *tended to Poverty* in many ſignal inſtances. 8. To be faithful here, is to have a ſerious reſpect to the end; that it *be to a Diſciple in the Name of a Diſciple*, with a due regard to their preſent

sent distress, and not by *partiality*, on some private interest and respect that may rise thereto else they have cause to fear, that both Principal and Interest is lost, nor can they put this Debt upon the Lord, where such a sad byas is with it. *Matth.* 10. *v* 42.

9. To be faithful here is to follow this *closely*, so as *not to be seen of Men*, else such have their *reward*, where this is an influencing motive, yea not to let the *Left-hand know what the Right-hand doth*, *Matth.* 6. 3. Here the giver should shut his Eyes when he opens his hand, with desire that it may never be known, until the day of the Lord, that great Day of Retribution, when that which hath been done in Secret shall be rewarded openly. *Mat.* 6. *v.* 4. 10 Here also is to be understood to give without grudging, cheerfully, as the true way to lay up Treasure to themselves, knowing that *the Lord loves a cheerful giver*. 2 *Cor.* 9. 7. 11. To be faithful here, is to be given to *Hospitality*, with a tender regard for entertaining of *strangers*, for in such habit *Angels have been entertained*. *Heb.* 13. *v.* 2. 12. The bounds and limites of our actings here must not only be the *household of faith*, but a tenderness, Condescendence and Readiness to help and relieve any distressed, even the worst of Men, as they have opportunity, which is so expresly required. 1. *Thes.* 3. *ver.* 12. *to abound in love towards all men*, so as to do good, to be useful, and exercise Tenderness towards all, which should be found a more effectual mean to gain Credit to the Gospel, than what is the way of many, who have a name and repute of Religion in this age.

QUEST. VI. *What you have now spoke about those, who have a large interest in the World, and in what terms*

terms they ave it, is undeniable, I confeſs, from the Scripture; but this concerns a few, in reſpect of ſuch as are of a Low and mean Condition *in the World, and what can theſe have to compenſe the want of ſuch a Talent and make their Lot deſirable or ſweet?*

Answ I hope you will not bring theſe things under queſtion, which may convincingly anſwer this. 1. That a ſerious Chriſtian could yet never be ſo Low, but he hath much more than he wants, though he ſhould be put to ſuch a reckoning with *Job*, I have now neither Children, Friends, Honour, or Eſtate in the world to call mine own: but I *know and am ſure that my Redeemer lives. Job.* 19. *v.* 25. and do you think that a mans lot, or the comfortable enjoyment thereof conſiſts *in the abundance of the things he poſſeſſeth Luk.* 12: 15. 2. Have the poor and deſpiſed cauſe to quarrel with their lot, if they be in truth partakers of the Grace of God, when it is ſo clear, there can be no ſubſtantial good in riches or honour, which the Lord hath caſt out of the Councel of his Love, towards thoſe, on whom he hath ſet his Heart from Eternity? 3. Yea hath he not deſigned the moſt of the Elect to a Poor, Low, and afflicted Condition here? *For you ſee your calling Brethren, how not many Wiſe, not many Noble, &c. according to the Fleſh hath he choſen.* 1 *Cor.* 1. 26, 27. 4. Hath not ſuch a peculiar income in the way of the Promiſe which theſe who are *full*, and abound moſt in the World cannot underſtand, and is not owned in the Scripture to be under ſuch a neceſſity to live by Faith, which made the Apoſtle give ſuch a ſtrange Account 2 *Cor.* 12. 9, 10. *I take pleaſure in my Infirmities, in Diſtreſs, in Perſecutions, &c. that the power of Chriſt may reſt on*

me, O what ſtrong and vigorous Acts of Faith and Love have oft followed the Chriſtians low and mean Eſtate in the World, whereto ſuch as were at eaſe have been wholly Strangers. 5. Have ſuch cauſe to quarrel with a low and deſpiſed lot, who the leſs they have here, whilſt they have a ſure evidence for Heaven, knowes they have the more before them? And whilſt others may reckon what they have by Year and Property, can make another Account what is their intereſt for all *Eternity*, and not grudge the *hireling's* wages, who know they are *Sons*, and *to abide in the Houſe for ever. Job.* 8. 25. 6. Would ſuch, were it put to their choice, *have their good things in this Life*, or do they expect to find a Heaven out of Heaven, and is not that Lot with greateſt Advantage ſuited to each of his Saints, that is moſt for promoting their Eternal intereſt, and *to make them meet to be partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in light*, *Col.* 1. *v.* 12. 7. It is not by the bulk you can Judge on the Chriſtians condition here in the World. a little Gold is of more Value than a great heap of ſome other Metals, and *a little that the Righteous hath is more than the Riches of many wicked. Pſal.* 37. *v.* 16, For there lies the Bleſſing; and what a difference is there betwixt ſuch, whoſe heart is gone up after his *Treaſure*, that is laid up for him in Heaven; and thoſe, who *mind Earthly things* and have their Heart in their Belly. *Phil.* 3. *v.* 19.

QUEST. VII. *Such have a ſweet and comforting part, whether the World ſmile or frown, who know there is an Eternity of Joy before them: But you ſee how many are not more Low in their outward State, than dreadfully wicked and looſe, without the leaſt ſerious weight of Religion on their Soul.* ANSW.

Answ. This may ſhew, that no Affliction, or the ſaddeſt Lot here can of it ſelf lead into Jeſus Chriſt, without the Efficacious and Irreſiſtible power of Grace; but as to their part, who are ſo viſibly Active to their own ruin, I muſt ſay, there ſeems not a more ſad and aſtoniſhing Sight, than ſuch are. 1. Who thus follow the World with a weeping Eye, and have their Heart cleave ſo faſt to it, which will ſcarce beſtow one flattering Smile on them, and know not what gains they might make of their preſent Affliction and Strait. 2. Who thus *ſeek the living among the Dead*, and their relief from the Earth from whence they ſee they cannot have it, who have ſuch greateſt things laid in their offer, to make them here and for ever bleſſed. 3. That the very Report of the *gain of Godlineſs* ſhould not Preſs them once to be this length, to know upon Trial, what might be the certainty thereof, and if ſuch an Advantage can be truly reached here, as to make the Poor Mans life more Sweet and Comforting under all the Toil of his Hand, than if he had the greateſt Eſtate of the Earth. 4. It may ſeem ſtrange, what theſe can poſſibly reckon upon their Condition in being Men, as deſirable above that of the Beaſts of the Field, who have ſo little either in hand, or hope to be Comforting; to know only a ſenſual Life with ſo ſmall and almoſt indiſcernable Advantage to Satisfy the Senſes. It is true, many ſuch Entertain a hope of a Bleſſedneſs to come, whilſt they are wholy Strangers to a Life of Grace here: But Oh! It is at ſuch a rate, that the Scripture of God muſt be falſe, if theirs be true. 5. How amazing alſo is it; to ſee for what theſe Periſh, and loſe their immortal Soul,

which is in it ſelf a higher Intereſt, than the Glory and Riches of all the Monarchies in the Earth, yea of more Value, than the Sun and Moon? Yet as if this were but ſome triffle, how eaſily do ſuch hazard the ſame for the ſmalleſt Gain; yea it may be ſaid, are content to ſerve Satan without the Wages of viſible pleaſure and ſatisfaction which others have in the World. 6. Yea how ſtrange is it, how many ſuch, whoſe Trade and Imployment lies moſt at *Sea*, who thus have ſuch peculiar enforcing Arguments to be ſerious about Religion, yet are ſo viſibly looſe in their Walk, and Strangers to a Chriſtian life.

QUEST. VIII *Is it ſure, there are ſuch of that Imployment, and I hope not a few, whoſe being convincingly Serious in the things of God, with a Chriſtian walk, to the credit of the Goſpel, is beyond Queſtion, But ſince what you have Spoke as to many of theſe, is too viſibly manifeſt, what are theſe preſſing Motives and Arguments that ſuch, whoſe calling lies moſt on the Sea, have more than others to take Religion deeply to Heart?*

ANSW. You may Judge what a preſſing Call ſuch have to be in greateſt earneſt about their Eternal ſtate. 1. Who are through moſt of their time ſo near a bordering with *Eternity, in Deaths often*: and their life hanging ſo frequently in ſuſpence before their Eyes. 2. Such, who cannot but have their Conſcience oft ſtruck with the Senſe of a God-Head, by ſeeing his Marvellous power ſhewed forth in the Depths, ſo as it may be ſaid, they live and converſe amongſt *Wonders*, to ſee that great Body of the *Sea*, how it is with ſuch Advantage made paſſable for Tranſport and Commerce; the regular Courſe of its ebbings

ebbings and flowings, with the ſingular uſe and ſubſerviency of the Tides; how it is ſhut up alſo with Gates and Barres, and hath its *apointed Bounds*, without which there could be no reaſon how a bank of Sand could reſtrain the great Oceans breaking forth. O! what a Book is thus ſpread open for Sea-faring Men to read, and bring near their thoughts with wondering, to Fear and Worſhip him, whoſe *Voice is ſo known on the mighty Waters*; who turns the moſt impetuous Storm into a Calm at his pleaſure, which is ſo far above all human reach, and cauſeth the ſwelling of an enraged Sea in a moment to know his Command and be ſtill. 3. What ought ſuch to be, who have not only been oft Surprized with preventing Mercy, when they were not aware from daſhin on ſome Shelve or Rock, or falling in on a bank of Sand, and thus brought out of greateſt hazard, even before they were put in Fear: But have oft likewiſe been reſcued from the very Jaws of preſent Death, in that manner, when no viſible or ordinary means could ever have Anſwered thereto. Oh! Can ſuch deliverance be ſo eaſily forgot, and what were then their thoughts of entering into endleſs Eternity, and meeting *grim Death* with ſuch a ſurpriſe? was it not then a matter of earneſt to pray? Or would you then have dared to break forth into an Oath? yea what a bleſſed State were you then made to reckon thoſe in, who had been formerly ſerious about Religion, and how ſoon may ſuch a Surpriſal meet you again? 4. What ought ſuch to be, and are Accountable for, who know how many Thouſands have been Swallowed up in theſe devouring Depths, and hear of ſuch ordinary Shipwracks, whilſt they

are yet preſerved? Oh! Doth not this marvellous long ſuffering and tenderneſs of the Lord have ſome ſerious voice? Hath it yet never tended to melt your Heart with Sorrow and Contrition, for ſo ſad a return you have hitherto given to ſuch forbearance. 5. What ſolemn and expreſs engagements are many if not moſt of ſuch under, and accountable for, *which their Lips have uttered, when trouble was upon them*, and when they were at the very brink of Periſhing, that if ſome extraordinary caſt of Providence had been deferr'd but a very few Moments longer, they had been loſt? Now let me ſeriouſly ask, what did you really intend? Was it to deal deceitfully with the moſt High, and be no more ſerious in the thoughts of this when ye were once at Land? If it be ſo, how can you dare to pray and plead with the Holy Lord in a new Strait? Oh! let me beſeech you, lay this to Heart, and that to make uſe of your preſent Calmes at Sea, for making ſure your Eternal intreſt, would help to make a ſweet Calm within on your Soul when a Storm ariſes. 6. Let me but add this what Advantage ſuch have, who have ſo clear an emblem of their Life and condition here ſo frequently before them, how thus they are under Sail, and moving to that Port where once the Anchor muſt be caſt down never to be weighed again: yea how there can be no ſafe reckoning to get ſafe to that bleſſed, O bleſſed and deſirable *Port of Glory*, without knowing how their courſe lyes, which from the Scripture is more infallibly clear, than they can be by any Cart or Compaſs? Let me but further add, how ſtrange it is to ſee ſome of theſe, ſo far from under the awe and dread of God; that they are not

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more concerned to put to *Sea*, and Work on the *Sabbath*, without any convincing neceſſity. than on any other day?

QUEST. IY. *What, is there ſuch a neceſſity for ſtrict obſervance of the Sabbath, as there is no Warrantable Liberty, both for Recreation, and Mens ordinary Buſineſs, after the publick Worſhip is once paſt?*

ANSW. I hope you will not dare to debate, 1. That the *Chriſtian Sabbath* hath by the Holy Ghoſt that impreſs and Authority put upon it, of being the *Lords Day*, a Day which is ſet apart and Conſecrate to him, on a higher Account, than the firſt Creation, wherein God *manifeſted in our Nature did reſt from all his Works, for the Redemption of his Church; and from the new Creation; and ſaw that all which he had done was very good*; that Day never to be forgot, wherein the Redemption of his Church being perfected, he had a full Acquittance for the whole Debt of his elect Church; that Day alſo on which his moſt uſual and Solemn Appearance to his Diſcibles after his *Reſurrection*, was; and ſhall we deny ſuch a Tribute of our Obſervance thereof, on ſo great an Account; and to him. who hath given us our time, *and is Lord of the Sabboth?* 2. Since it is the alone prerogative of God to make a *Day Holy*, and that the *firſt Day of the Week* is that piece of our time, which is only ſet apart for him under the *New Teſtament*, ſhould not ſuch a Solemn and *Conſecrate time* be applyed to Spiritual Duties? and is the higheſt of *Sacriledge* to turn that which is *Holy* to civil or common Actions, when they are no Works of neceſſity or mercy, for then is ſuch a Day no more *Holy* but common. 3. You know how deep the *Prophanation* thereof hath been oft found

found to draw on Mens Conſcience, ſo as it is rare to ſee a *flagitious Perſon* under any remorſe, when brought to a Scaffold, but hath been then enforced to cry out of the breach of the *Sabbath*, and how their Guilt herein did ſtare them in the Face, as a provoking cauſe of what had thus befallen them. 4. Should not theſe dreadful *marks* of the holy *Judgment of God*, which have been thus put both on Perſons and Places, have an awe and dread on Mens Conſciences; yea ſuch Inſtances, with theſe ſignal and convincing Circumſtances, as all might ſee, who looked but at a Diſtance thereon, the ſtroke pointing as with a Finger, at the provoking cauſe? 5. Do we hope for an everlaſting *Sabbath* in Heaven, whilſt here a few Hours in Spiritual converſe with God, and the Souls reſting and ſolacing it ſelf in him, is ſo burdenſome a Work; yea, whilſt it is ſure, the greateſt of delights and pleaſure known upon the Earth are theſe which are Spiritual, to ſuch as ever knew what it is to be Chriſtians.

DIALOGUE IV.

QUESTION. I.

SINCE we have had this Occaſion to touch a little ſome of the great and weighty concerns of practical Religion, *I muſt yet Preſs you with ſome few Propoſals, Concern-*

Concerning the preſent Time *we are Fallen in, when ſuch Appearances and a faint almoſt every where now is, ſo as many are like to give over, as Men aſtoniſhed, and loſe both their Heart and Hand at once in the matter of Duty.*

ANSWER.

We are indeed fallen in trying *Times*. But conſider alſo. 1. What great *Confirmation* have been given in to the Truth, ere our Night grew ſo Dark, and have now loſt ſight of them all. 2. What kept the Saints from ſinking an *Hundred Years* paſt, when to be burnt at the Stake for the Truth was one of the moſt uſual Leſſons of Chriſtianity; and to quit all for Jeſus Chriſt? Yea, whence was it, that their Strength and Reſolution grew, as the Tide grew ſtrong againſt them? 3. Look through the whole of the Scripture, and on the Churches condition under the New Teſtament, and I am ſure, nothing can be more clear than this, that the greateſt *triumph* that ever Jeſus Chriſt hath had in his followers, was not in calm and proſperous times from without, but when they were at the loweſt.

QUEST. II. *But how is it in ſuch times of abounding light, as theſe now are, that theſe great confirmations of the truth, which were then given in by the Saints, are now ſo rare, yea much unknown to moſt of this Generation?*

ANSW. The way of the Lord is ſtill the ſame, and in all times his Word doth good to them that walk uprightly. But it may be clear. 1. How ſuch degrees of *Peace, Comfort, and Aſſurance* of the Truth hath ſtill kept ſome proportion to ſome more remark-

able time and measure of the Saints sufferings, *the Spirit of God and of Glory then resting upon them.* 1. *Pet.* 4. *v.* 14. 2. Then was the *life of Faith a following of the Lord fully*, with a large venturing on hand in another manner known amongst his followers, than it seems to be at this Day; and Oh! How rare a practice is it now to believe, when there are almost no sensible Grounds to be comforting? 3. Though former Ages had not that measure of light which is now, yet it may be seen how the awe and Authority thereof was in another manner on the Conscience of Christians, and their Work to *live Religion*, when there was no visible inducement to profess the same, but for the Truths sake; *but they endured, as seeing him who is invisible*, and did live and feed on the very Marrow and Substance of Religion in another manner, than seems by the most of Professors now to be understood.

QUEST. III. *What might be the most Effectual mean for recovery and to be led in the way of the promise of the Lords returning with these wonted Signs of his Presence, when it seems to be so dark and dismal an Hour now on the Church?*

ANSW. I hope with some Assurance I may offer these. 1. That such as love the Truth would with greatest Seriousness watch against the *present Publick, and prevailing Evils of the times*, to have their Garments kept from the smallest touch and defilements thereof; I mean such *Evils*, after which the *Multitude* most runs, where the Countenance and favourable Aspect of *great Men* seems most to follow, and is a most remarkable *Contagion* in the time; for it is here the smallest Accession will draw deeper on the

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Conſcience, and have a more difficult recovery than other perſonal infirmities, and a ſevere withſtanding thereto lead in to moſt ſenſible Enjoyments of the Spirit of God. 2 Let us Enquire where the *Teſtimony of the preſent Day to the Truth doth moſt lye*, which may be more peculiar to ſome of the *reformed Churches* of Chriſt than others; for in a cloſe Adherence thereto we may aſſuredly hope for the outletting of the Spirit of God, from his own Promiſe of having a ſpecial reſpect thereto. *Rev.* 3. 10 *and* 12. 11 and herein *ſhould the Truth make you Free.* It hath been the Bleſſed diſpoſal of the Lord, that this great Intereſt of Chriſt in his *being King and Head over his Church, and the alone Lawgiver thereto, and that his Kingdom is not only within on the Souls of the Elect, but over his Church, as a vihble Politick Body diſtinct from all the Kingdoms of the Earth, is that great Truth, which the Church of Scotland hath now in theſe late times had moſt peculiarly Aſſigned to Witneſs for.* Yea this great truth we may ſee not there alone, but elſe where moſt viſibly oppoſed, and I hope will be owned, as the Common cauſe of all the Reformed Churches, to whom this Crown and Supremacy of their glorious Head ſhould be dearer, than all their intereſts within time. Great is that Peace and Joy will be found in a cloſe Adherence thereto, a more large outpowering of the Spirit might be hoped for to follow this Teſtimony, when it is now called for in the Seaſon thereof. 3. What a hopeful preſage were it of the Lords return in this Day, if both private Chriſtians, and Miniſters of the Goſpel were found more preſt to bring into themſelves their deep Acceſſion and ſhare in the provoking cauſe of this *great Wrath* now

gone forth, and their being content to be *Abased* and lye in the Duſt, that the *unſpotted Righteouſneſs of GOD* might ſhine forth? we might then aſſuredly hope for ſome more viſible Signs of his preſence, and a more joint uniting in knowing both the cauſe and Cure of our greateſt Diſtempers. 4. What a Bleſſed Aſſay ſhould this be to the Churches healing, if a greater *oneneſs* amongſt the Godly in theſe times, were with more deſire and Intenſeneſs followed; who have this with ſuch expreſneſs left by our great Maſter not only for the Credit of the Goſpel, and promoting the intereſt thereof, but as a Seal of our Love and Obedience to him? Oh! that ſo few are found with that Suitable weight on their Spirits to be concerned in this, as though this great Duty of mutual Freedom, could not be managed with that humble ceding, and prudent tenderneſs to others, as might tend to a further cementing in love; yea to go together in others hand without any Jarr. Let the things of God have a preference to our own things, and our Maſters intereſt be dearer to us, than our Selves; and Chriſtians will not then long be at ſo ſad a Diſtance with others; both in their Judgments and Affections, but that bleſſed ſtrife ſhould moſt appear, how to ſtrive together, and not againſt other for the intereſt of Chriſt. Yea with this I muſt add, that which Chriſtians ſhould much ſtudy, and ſo Natively reſolves in mutual Love and Condeſcendence one to another, is *humility*, which when Corruption cauſeth the mind to ſwell, will quickly help it to fall; and how ſad is it, that ſuch a Name is not with greateſt Abhorrence entertained, as that of *a Party*, or keeping in there-

therewith; what is *Christ divided?* or is there any other *Head* and *Leader* than he? *who is* Paul? or *who is Appollos?* Or have we another intereſt, if we hope through Grace to be accepted of him at his Second Coming, but his Truth to contend for, which without any perſonal quarrel or bitterneſs, we ſhould with *Levi know neither Father nor Brother?* But Oh! What we loſe oft in the very manner of our deport and following of Duty. when there may be a ſerious Aim on both ſides at one and the ſame Scope, which calls much for a being alone, in a near Fellowſhip with God;, to meet together with more Advantage.

QUEST. IV. *But you ſee under what reproach the way of the Lord is at this Day, and how much the Credit of the Truth ſuffers by ſore and ſubtile Reflections that are caſt thereon.*

ANSW. 1. What? doth this ſhake any, or render the Truth doubtful, if ever they knew the power and certainty thereof on their Soul? for it is ſure, religion will never loſe Weight with thoſe who know it in Earneſt, under the greateſt Cloud of Detraction and Contempt. 2. What can the furtheſt Eſſays of ſuch reach, who dare not avowedly deny the *Scripture*, but are enforced to own that which breaketh all their deſigns, ſince it is enough, the Teſtimony of God in his Word is ſure? nor can the Sun ceaſe to ſhine, whatever thick Vapours may Darken the Air a little to us. 3. Do but ask the greateſt *Reproacher* of Godlineſs, what his thoughts are, when *Death* is looking him in the Face, if he will put this in his Teſtament, or adventure to Seal ſuch a Witneſs with his Dying breath. O, is it not then, that the Mockers are enforced to confeſs they now find Religion to

be a matter of earneſt, which before they ſcoffed at.

QUERY V. *But it ſeems ſtrange, what quiet and Confidence many ſuch, who are viſible haters of the truth, and of the Power of Religion, own in their way?*

ANSW. Friend, this is one of the ſad Miſtakes moſt are in, but let me beſeech you, come a little more near, and then ſee and Judge what true Peace and quiet ſuch have, whatever preſent Sun-ſhine they may be under from the World. 1. Who are ſo oft at Work, how to Bridle their Conſcience to frame diverſions, and find out ſome falſe Grounds of Peace, whilſt the Truth of God upon any near Approach is ſo viſible a terrour to them. 2 Why do theſe hate a *ſearching Miniſtry* ſo much though the Word name none? Is it not becauſe the light torments them, and they cannot ſtand before it? and are ſuch to be envyed by any? 3. How is the ſenſe of Guilt, and of their former way ſo Affrighting upon a Surprizing ſtrait, or a near Approach to *Death*? or would you wiſh to Dye with ſuch, on whoſe very Countenance may be oft Read, (let them conceal never ſo much) *theſe dreadful preſages and fear of a Judgment to come?*

4. And is not *Wickedneſs* a viſible puniſhment to it ſelf, which with ſuch a ſting and fear is haunted, as it may be ſeen, when they ſeek moſt to outdare their Conſcience, they find it ſtronger than they, and whilſt no ground of Fear or Trouble is from without, yet a dreadful Sound is in their Ear, of what is to come? 5. Why are theſe under ſuch dread to be alone, and thus in any meaſure ſerious with their Soul, to look but over their own Caſe, and is this a deſireable Peace or Quiet? 6. And whence is it that ſo

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many, who have moſt derided holineſs in their day, are preſſed to enquire and call for ſome *ſerious Miniſter of Chriſt*; yea to deſire ſuch moſt, whom they hated before, when Death once is dealing with them?

QUEST. VI. *But whilſt the times we are now fallen in are ſo remarkably ſad and afflicting, what can the Righteous do, or would moſt help againſt the imbittering Troubles and Griefs of a Chriſtian Life?*

ANSW. Let us conſider 1. How much of the Scripture is peculiarly Writ for the *Afflicted*, and ſuch as have no viſible help or comfort. 2. That the very Nature of *Affliction* and Trouble is ſo far changed in its being Sanctifiedly exerciſing, as inſtead of *Poiſon* to be made *Medicinal*. 3. Are not the Chriſtians ſaddeſt Hours on as Swift a courſe, as their time; and each Hour and Day putting by ſome part of its appointed Meaſure? Yea though ſome *Thouſands* of Croſſes ſhould be alloted you, they will come to one at laſt. 4. A few Hours under the pain of a *wounded Spirit*, and the Terrours of the Wrath of God, would make ſuch to reckon a freedom from this, (though with the ſoreſt Affliction) were a ſweet Calm and Deliverance. 5. Is not a Sanctified *Croſs*, without any bounds ſet to the Meaſure thereof, one of the moſt expreſs Scripture Signs of the Love of God to his own, the want whereof might indeed be the Chriſtians ſoreſt Trial, leaſt his ſhare be with the World, and ſuch were *Baſtards*, not *Sons*? 6. If you can Read the moſt dark and ſaddeſt Providence with that Commentary of the Scripture thereon, you will then know how the Saints Afflictions ſtand for *Bleſſings*; *Matth* 5 *v.* 10. 11. and *diverſe Temptations* to be a Solid ground of Joy and Comfort, *Jam.* 1. *v.* 2. 7. Conſider but in

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the Saddest *Affliction*, how much Sadder this might have been, and that they are not thus a *Scandal* to the Generation of the Righteous. 8. What if all our Life had been a continued tract of *Grief, Bitterness and Trouble*, and but rarely the least of outward comforts drop'd in, and so much only given as to keep from Sinking? Oh! durst such Quarrel, who knew of an Eternity of Joy in the Close? 9. It was a *right Way* the Lord led his People in, when he led them through a Labyrinth of sore Troubles in the *Wilderness*. *Psal.* 107. v. 7. and is there shewed as an *Emblem* of the Journeying State of the Church and each of the Saints here. 10. One sight of that Glorious Land which is above, with the first Moment of the afflicted Christians entry there, will compense to the furthest a Life Time of Sorrows and Grief. 11. Is it not here the *Faith and Patience of the Saints* must shine forth, the *Trial* whereof is a more invaluable Thing, than all the Treasures of the Earth. 12. The season of *enduring*, you know, is but short, which for all Eternity will never meet the Christian again; and Oh! would you lose even the least of such an Opportunity, not in the Trial of your Faith and Patience only, but of your *Love* to Jesus Christ, that *Tribulation and Distress was not able to Separate betwixt him and you! Rom.* 8. *v.* 39 And your tried love under sorest outward pressures may be reported in Heaven and recorded there. I shall but add, how sweet must that be to a Christian, when he can say, *Let my Beloved come and Eat of his pleasant Fruits, Cant.* 4. *v.* 16 which to them had most pain and wrestlings in bringing forth.

QUEST. VII. *What are these pleasant Fruits which can be found under the Cross, and the many imbittering Griefs and Troubles of a Christians Life?* ANSW.

Answ. it is ſure, no Seaſon hath been more Remarkeable for Sowing to the Spirit, and bringing forth much Fruit to the Lord, than a time of the *Croſs*, and moſt ſearching Trials that way; and theſe have been known to ſuch as were ſuitably Exerciſed thereby; the Gain and Pleaſure whereof hath made the Remembrance of their ſaddeſt Hours ſweet. 1. When *Contrition and Tenderneſs, and ſoft walking* before the Lord hath followed thereon; for ſuch are his delight, in whom he takes greateſt Pleaſure, *Eſai* 58. *v.* 15. 2. *Humility* and the Chriſtians geting his Spirit kept low, is ſuch a Fruit, as may make their reckoning Sweet on any other loſs; the way to know how to *abound*, is to know *how to be Abaſed. Phil* 4, 12. and this is one of the peculiar ends of Afflicting Providences, *to hide Pride from Men. Job.* 33. 17. O bleſſed they who are no leſs concerned to hide it from themſelves. 3. Is it not a *pleaſant Fruit*, where, by the *croſs* Jeſus Chriſt is more endeared to his People, and thus Precious unto them; their Soul cleaveth to him in deſire and love, even when their Soul cleaveth to the Duſt by a humbling Rod? O what a Rent and Tribute is this, which in the Chriſtians ſaddeſt hours only can be payed unto their bleſſed Maſter? 4. A through *Reſignation* and *Surrender* to the Lord and his diſpoſal, is a rare and choice Improvement of the *Croſs*. Yea it is then found, a Chriſtian to be neareſt his mercy, and his burden moſt ſenſibly grows light; and that this makes a ſpeedy ripening for times of refreſhment from the preſence of the Lord. 5. This great *Fruit* is then to be ſought after, by *believeing in hope, when it is againſt hope*, which is one of the higheſt pieces of Service for giving Glory to God,

 Some great Truths, we ſhould oft converſe with that a Chriſtian here can be called to, and thus for putting to *their Seal that God is true.* 6. It is at the loweſt Chriſtians have the moſt remarkable advantage, by patient enduring for being *more than Conquerors through him that hath loved them*, *Rom.* 8. *v.* 37. yea that thus the *Power of Chriſt reſting upon them*, may have in ſuch a greater Triumph, and over a more formidable Party, than ever *Alexander* or *Caſar* could boaſt of in all their Conqueſts.

QUEST. VIII. *Whilſt it may be ſtrange, how ſmall a Proportion the Practice of moſt in theſe Times ſeem to have to their Light, and Mens uſual Converſe with Religion more about the uppermoſt Boughs, than to lie near the great and weighty Things thereof; what might moſt help to put ſome deeper Impreſſion and weight of a Chriſtians Work on him, and provoke to Seriouſneſs, by having ſome greateſt Truths moſt frequently kept in ſight?*

ANSW. You know, it is not the moſt marvellous Things of Religion, nor if one *ſhould riſe from the dead* could deeply work upon the Heart without the *Spirit of God.* But I muſt tell you what was the deſire of a *Judicious Father to a hopeleſs Son, when he was a dying, that he would but once a Day take half an Hour alone by himſelf, which upon Trial and ſome deep Reflection*, afterward that young Man had, what this deſire might mean, was bleſſed to be a Means of his Recovery: Oh! if moſt who are profeſſed Chriſtians were but once this length, that beſide ſome retirement to Prayer, they could but for a few Moments be *alone once a Day* to conſider theſe *Truths*, which I ſhall here Inſtance. 1. What were deſirable and comforting in the State of Man, if it looked not higher than Things ſeen, or his preſent abode in the World?

2. How

2. How ſwiftly are the Enjoyments of the Earth, and Delights of the Fleſh gone and periſhed in the preſent uſe thereof? 3. O what ſhould this be to think ſeriouſly on, that the *Goſpel is an undoubted Reality*, and ſo far hath the holy God been mindful of Man and magnified him, yea even beyond fallen Angels, that *Jeſus Chriſt ſhould have come down to the World* to make a purchaſe of ſuch to himſelf, and ſave them from the Wrath that is to come? 4. That the import of the Goſpel is no leſs than an *eterntiy of Glory*, even to the meaneſt of the Saints; and what a bleſſed ſtrait were this for a Chriſtian; how to divide his wondering betwixt that which is now paſt, in the great work of *Redemption*, and that which is to come, in the full manifeſtation of *Glory*. 5. Let us think more frequently on this alſo, that the pooreſt now on the earth hath an *immortal Soul*, that is of a more excellent Nature, and more ineſtimable Value, than theſe viſible Heavens, the Sun, Moon, and Stars; yea ſuch, as no leſs than the Blood of the Son of God revealed in our Nature could ranſom from Wrath, and yet we put ſo ſmall a Price thereon. 5. That it is ſure, ſo great and ſolemn a Buſineſs as *Death* is before us, and we muſt know ſhortly what it means, and to enter into another World. O what will this once be, and ſhould it not now deeply concern each, that *Death come not on all at once*, by more frequent and ſerious converſe therewith? 6. Let us but now bring near our Thoughts, what Thoughts we ſhall have of the *World*, when our Eyes are ſhutting upon it, never to enjoy this any more? And what Thoughts that marvellous Change muſt cauſe on Mens Spirits, when once entred into endleſs Eternity? 7. How marvellous is this,

76 *ſome great truths, we ſhould oft to converſe with* that may cauſe our Hearts to fail with wondering on ſome near Converſe therewith, that not only there is ſuch a hope as to be for ever in Heaven, but that our *Nature* ſhould be ſo far advanced, even above the *Nature of Angels*, in that unconceiveable *Union with the divine Nature* conjoined for ever, in our bleſſed Head and Redeemer. 8. And what ſhould this be to think on, that our *Bodies*, when laid in the Duſt, ſhall not only be aſſuredly raiſed, but made like to the glorious Body of Chriſt, *Phil.* 3. 21?

FINIS.